

A History Of The Polish American Community Of South Grafton, Massachusetts



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and
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Acknowledgments

Sincere thanks to Mildred Bean of the Grafton Historical Society who showed interest in the history of the Polish people of South Grafton.

I thank Rev. Michael Rose for access to the records of St. James Church.

A special thanks go to Rev. Charles Borowski who helped with suggestions and checked the accuracy of the Polish words.

I am grateful to Mr. Floyd Ramsey, author and lecturer for his interest in this subject and for editing my manuscript.

I appreciate the encouragement of my children, Maryanne Boberg, Helen Blazis, Elizabeth Weeks, Cathy Polselli, John, Thomas, and Stanley. They remember their grandmother well, and stressed the importance of this writing.

This work would not have been complete without the presentation of Joseph Kuras, grandson of immigrants, who has written about the Polish National Home Association of South Grafton, Massachusetts as it is today.

I would also like to thank the Grafton Education Alliance for their financial support of this project.

Stasia Obara Rawinski

Dedication

It is with great love and respect that I dedicate this history of the Polish Community of South Grafton, Massachusetts to the memory of our fathers and mothers who had the courage to leave their parents and travel to an unknown land.

Because of their labors and sacrifices, we, the children and grandchildren of these immigrants, had a secure home life, education and happiness. They have instilled in us the Polish character of love of God and country and left a heritage we cherish.

To the memory of all these Polish immigrants who settled here in South Grafton, and especially to my dear parents, Zofia Linek Obara and Thomas Obara I dedicate this work.

Stasia Obara Rawinski

Preface

This history of the Polish community of South Grafton, Massachusetts is written to show how the early immigrants labored and sacrificed to establish themselves in the freedom of America.

It will also list and show not only statistics, but it will take you back in time and you will know the persons themselves and the actions they took to organize themselves and blend into the community.

It is also in the interests of the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission because the Polish National Home lies in the path of this Heritage Corridor.

In order to maintain authenticity and the flavor of Polish, I felt it important to keep the names of the early immigrants as they, themselves, signed them. Later, as they blended into the American scene, their names were adjusted slightly.

Stasia Obara Rawinski

Disclaimer

The statements and descriptions made in this book are those made by the authors, Stasia Obara Rawinski and Joseph Kuras, to the best of our abilities from translations of minutes of meetings of the Polish Organizations in South Grafton, Massachusetts and from our own memories.

We are not responsible or liable for any statements, opinions or omissions made herein.

Stasia Obara Rawinski
Joseph Kuras

The Early Polish-American Community

Polish Character

Poland's Tragic Geographic Location

To record the history of the Polish community of South Grafton, it is necessary to understand the Polish people and their origins. The geographic location and the history of Poland had a marked effect on their character.

Poland's location in Eastern Europe offered no natural boundaries except the Tatre mountains in the Carpathian chain in the south. Its neighboring countries were constantly overpowering and dividing the country among themselves.

Poland's Heroes For Freedom

In the years when the Grand Principality of Lithuanian and Kingdom of Poland's land stretched from the Baltic Sea to the Ukraine, she was a proud people. Poland's history shows the great love for freedom which was evident in their willingness to shed their blood on their own soil and for freedom in the world.

Tadeusz Kosciuszko, a great believer in the freedom of mankind, came to America in 1776 where he served under Washington in the Revolutionary war. He returned to Poland in 1786 and there led a force against invading Russians. Even though he, himself, was a member of the nobility, he had visions and promises of emancipating the serfs. Freedom became embedded in Polish hearts.

Casimir Pulaski arrived in America in 1777 to join the American struggle for independence. He became Brigadier General of Cavalry. He was wounded in the battle of Savannah, which took place in Charleston, South Carolina, and died on October 11, 1779 at the age of 32. Many American streets and squares bear the names of Kosciuszko or Pulaski to honor their sacrifices.

Even through turbulent years of persecution, Poland's children rose to become beacons of light and pride in the world. For example, poet Mickiewicz, who mythologically formed a Poland when he wrote, "cast in Christ among nations, crucified in the partitions and awaiting resurrection."^{*}

Authors like Henryk Sienkiewicz and Joseph Conrad; scientists Copernicus and Maria Sklodowska Cure; musicians like Chopin and Paderewski brought their contributions to the world. In our time, the world can appreciate the greatest Pole of all, Pope John Paul III who

^{*} Encyclopedia Americana, Grolier, Inc., Danbury, Conn. 07816. p. 319

gave himself to God and to the world.

Emigration Years

The Late 1800's and Early 1900's

The period of great emigration to America occurred in the late 1800's and early 1900's while Poland was divided among Russia, Prussia and Austria^{*}. During this time Polish could not be taught in schools, so people kept their children at home. Poverty, which was everywhere, added to their misery. The future held no promise for them. Hard work was the lot of each member of the family from early childhood to the grave.

The word "Poland" comes from "pole" which means "place of fields", and much of the land in Poland was agricultural. For this reason, owning land became the measure of one's wealth and security. When children married it was customary that a portion of land be given to them. Since most families had many children, land was divided in long, narrow strips. Often there was not enough land to give to each child, which resulted in another necessary solution. Often the oldest child inherited the land and accepted the obligation of caring for the parents until they died.

Hope for Freedom ...America

The rest of the children were expected to "seek their fortune" in the world. America was the magic word. Statements like, "America's streets are paved with gold," spread like fire throughout Europe. Leaving one's home to go to America was indeed a great sacrifice both on the part of parents and child. A better life for the child was the hope of the parents, and the separation from parents and family for the rest of their lives was the sacrifice of the young people.

^{*} Map of partitions, page A-1

Arrival in South Grafton

Town and church records show that the earliest Polish immigrants arrived in the South Grafton area about 1900. It is interesting to learn the areas from where they came.

Areas From Which They Came

<u>Village or city</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Country</u>
Rzeszów	Galicia	Austria
Brezerzoa	Galicia	Austria
Czymba	Galicia	Austria
Wojcina	Galicia	Austria
Kordzina	Galicia	Austria
Cieszyna	Galicia	Austria
Kamienica Góra	Galicia	Austria
Frejstok	Galicia	Austria
Glinek Dólny	Galicia	Austria
Zakluczem	Galicia	Austria
Grodzisko Górne	Galicia	Austria
Grodzisko Dólne	Galicia	Austria
Pserolka		Russia
Tunkowicz		Russia
Przewtawa		Russia
Twawrowicz		Russia
Winska		Russia
Przewienka		Russia

It is clear from this list that a majority of those immigrants came from the same area, Galicia, which was located in the southeastern part of Poland. Because Poland was partitioned, their country of origin had to be listed as either Austria, Prussia or Russia. The Poles, however, considered themselves Polish from Poland.

Mill Workers

The Industrial Revolution was at its height in the early 1900's. As a consequence, American factories had perfected the loom and this led to efficient production. In the South Grafton area workers were desperately needed.

When the immigrants arrived here, they found three textile mills along the Blackstone River which were named after their founders. The Saunders Cotton Mill was located on the western edge of the village named Saundersville. The second mill, originally called the Canal Cotton Mill, was later called the Fisher Manufacturing Company, located in Fisherville. The third mill was on the eastern edge of the village called The Grafton Woolen Company, later

became known as the Wuskanut Worsted in Farnumsville.

Depending on where they lived, the immigrants would pick up their mail at one of three post offices: The Saundersville Post Office, the Fisherville Post Office* , or the Farnumsville Post Office. Each factory provided housing for its employees. Unmarried men lived in boardinghouses. Women generally stayed with families at a charge of \$4.00 per month. An extra cost was the "Charge Book" kept in the grocery store where the workers paid up their account each month.

The Saundersville Mill

The Saunders Cotton Mill provided apartments or boardinghouse accommodations. Long block houses of 4 or 6 units were built along Main Street. Duplex dwellings were for foremen. The owner, Esek Saunders, built an impressive Victorian home in 1866 at 176 Main Street where it can still be admired for its architectural beauty.

The Fisherville Mill

The Fisher Company was a very large mill which had two villages. The "Old Village" as it was called, was located on the northern side of Main Street and was made up of three rows of buildings. The first row had a large grocery store on Main Street beside the railroad bridge, plus a Post Office and a barber shop. The next two rows of houses were long blocks of 6-family units each. These block houses had only front and back steps to sit on after work on a hot evening. Outhouses were at the far end of the village just before the land dropped off sharply to the Blackstone River.

The "New Village" on the southern side of Main Street was much larger. The boardinghouse was a large structure. Its newer houses were constructed to accommodate from two to four families. A large baseball field was built on the southern end of the village and a hall for entertainment was on Ferry Street. Later this hall was transformed into a movie theater.

Prominent on Main Street, near the village, was the library which the Fisher Manufacturing Company donated to the town. Next to the library was the Kerr mansion and along both sides of Main Street were the duplex and single houses for the mill executives and their families.

*My father left Poland about 1910 wearing a destination tag to his cousin which read:

Vincent Obara,
Box 162
Fisherville, Mass.

The Farnumsville Mill

The Farnumsville company's village was efficiently built close to the mill by English carpenters. Along Main Street was the boarding house next to a market. Houses were either long blocks or square houses having four family units.

The Harding Street section for foremen had an added touch of "grace" with hedges and lovely, round light fixtures along cemented walkways. Later the company built a school at the end of Harding Street for the children of the area. Another company construction was the entertainment hall on Depot Street. Farther down Depot Street was the mansion of Harry Daw which was recently restored to its original beauty by its current owners, Mr. and Mrs. Scott Saltus.

French-Canadian Co-workers

Into this exciting world came immigrants from Canada and Poland with strong, young arms to tackle anything. Ten hour days, six days a week were expected from workers for a pay of approximately \$6.00 per week. Their dexterous hands soon learned the skills which were required for each job. Some became weavers. Others learned the machinery well enough to become loom fixers for a better wage.

The security of a steady income surpassed the difficulties which the mills created. The workers put up with noise and vibrations, dirty working conditions, the humidity necessary for the weaving, and also the dangers of breaking machinery and the lint-filled air which often took its toll on the weaker workers.

The mixture of French and Polish cultures had an interesting result. With long hours in the mill, as they worked side by side, the need to converse was vital. Over the roar of machinery they yelled into each others' ears and with added sign language, they communicated. Friendly personalities surfaced as time went by, and some workers soon began to joke and laugh together. Soon the Polish were asking, "Comment ça va?" and the French were asking, "Jak sie Masz?" (How are you?) A common bond between them was the Mass at St. James Church which was in Latin...exactly as it was at home in Poland and exactly as it was in Canada. Even though the sermons every other Sunday were in French, a Polish priest was invited to hear confessions from time to time. The nearest Polish church was in Worcester, but it was impossible to travel there every Sunday.

Family Life

The names of the first children born of Polish immigrants listed in the Baptismal records of St. James Church, Fisherville, were written in Latin.

Baptism Records, St. James Church

<u>Date</u>	<u>Child</u>	<u>Parents</u>
Feb. 28, 1904	Sephaniam	Wojciech Kosiba and Anna Kapalar
Aug. 28, 1904	Mieczysian	Michael Kalisz and Bronislawa Wawszkiewicz
Sept. 17, 1904	Hennicum	Stanislaw Kapala and Katazena Wowanskiewicz
Aug. 8, 1905	Franciszek	Joanne Kalisz and Sophia Krugel
Aug. 12, 1905	Marian	Wladyslaw Tomkiewicz and Katazyzna Kochanek
Aug. 13, 1905	Amelia	Stanislaw Pelczar and Barbara Pioceska
Sep. 3, 1905	Wladyslaw	Michael Buba and Agata Krychta
Sep. 23, 1905	Wladyslaw	Joseph Such and Olympia Tomkiewicz
Feb. 24, 1906	Jozef Henriam	Wojciech Eosiba and Anna Kapala
July 7, 1906	Julian	Thomasz Hospod and Agata Majkut
Sep. 16, 1906	Jozef	Joanne Kalisz and Sophia Krugel
Oct. 13, 1906	Gulielmen, Georgium	Thomas Misa and Apolonia Czerwonka
Oct. 14, 1906	Anna	Franciszek Matuszek and Carolina Gazda
Dec. 8, 1906	Franciscum	Joanne Zawalski and Anna Mularczyk
May 5, 1906	Stanislaw	Isadore Gardzina and Anna Suczka
June 30, 1907	Helena	Joseph Such and Olympia Tomkiewicz
Sep. 8, 1907	Marian	child of Albert Kostka and Barbara Kulpa
April 8, 1908	Joanne	Wojciech Kuras and Aniela Matuszek
July 17, 1909	Henrium	Jozef Such and Olympia Tomkiewicz
March 12, 1911	Stanislaw	Antoni Szajna and Maria Piekos
March 30, 1911	Adolphum	Adolphum Kuczinski and Elizabeth Zuromski

It is evident that the Polish community increased very quickly from the number of Polish Baptisms listed each year. These Baptisms were largely the result of the early immigrants' urging their sisters, brothers and cousins to come to the South Grafton area.

Purchase of Homes

On arrival, the first goal of the immigrants was to get work. Marriage and children followed. With the coming of children it became necessary for each family to try to buy a place of their own away from the restrictive living found in company houses. One by one, families looked for small farms or houses which had enough land for a garden and fruit trees, and even to raise animals.

Education

The need for education was filled by attending evening classes for citizenship at the Fisherville Grammar School, located where the present new school is now. Their horizons kept broadening, which enabled them to blend into the American way of life. Names like Jozef became Joseph, Franciszek became Frank, Stanislaw became Stanley, etc.

The Tadeusz Kosciuszko Orchestra

The immigrants brought with them their God-given talents as well as holiday traditions and their inimitable Polish music. It is said, "The Polish people work hard and play hard," as evidenced by the peppy Polkas and quick Obereks as well as the soothing Polish Waltzes.

Because of the close proximity of Northbridge to Farnumsville, it was convenient for the Northbridge Polish people to join the Farnumsville and Fisherville people in organizations and to participate in social functions. A group of young men from these communities was organized by Mr. Korlacki to form the Tadeusz Kosciuszko Polish Orchestra^{*}. They were needed for Polish social functions as well as for parades.

The orchestra included the following members:

Sobestyan Matuszek	Drums	Wojciech Kuras	Piccolo
Piotr Tecza	Tuba	Tomasz Obara	Clarinet
Wladyslaw Prejsner	Cornet	Stanislaw Stopyra	Clarinet
Józef Cyganowski	Cornet	Stanislaw Matuszek	Trumpet
Józef Gniadek	Trombone	Franciszek Satlawa	Trumpet
Józef Sabicki	Trombone	Józef Koziol	Trumpet
Antoni Szarek	Cornet	Vincent Obara	Trumpet
Franciszek Tecza	Cornet	Józef Swidrak	Drums
Józef Mika	Cornet	Józef Polak	Cymbals

^{*} See photograph, page A-2

Polish Ladies

There was a saying that “The girls from Galicia are special”. Men who came to America wrote songs about searching for a Galicijanka. How fortunate were the young men of South Grafton to have so many of these girls right here! The girls were reputed to be pretty, hard-working, thrifty and of good character.

My mother, Zosia Linek, was 19 years old when she arrived in South Grafton in 1912. She had the advantage of traveling with her neighbor, Aniela Matuszek Kuras, who had been visiting her parents and was returning to America.

Upon arrival, Zosia took a room with the Stanley Stopyra family and later with the Kostka family. She worked as a weaver in the Fisher Manufacturing Company. She had been courted by several young men, but she was very fussy to find a man of good character. By the time she was 30 years old, she was an “old maid” with 12 God-children.

When Thomas Obara’s wife Anna died in Poland from tuberculosis, Tom was left with 3 small children in Poland and twin sons here. For a year he courted Zosia Linek and won her heart. They were married in 1923 and immediately arranged to have the 3 children come from Poland under the care of the Travelers’ Aid Society. They bought a home in 1924. When I was 3 months old the children arrived from Poland and all the family was reunited under one roof.

Instant motherhood with a large family was indeed a challenge for Zosia who was determined to do her best. She received advice from other mothers and learned to cook and to sew.

All Polish ladies who had a patch of soil planted gardens. In the fall they taught each other how to preserve fruit and vegetables into jars for winter use. It is important to remember that most of the Polish people had large families. Some ladies were able to work in the mill while bringing up their children. Their clean houses were carpeted with hand-made rugs* made from clothing which was no longer wearable. Nothing was wasted.

Polish Cooking and Shopping

Polish cooking was both plentiful and nourishing. A pound of beef became a large pot of beef-vegetable soup; a chicken became chicken-noodle soup; cabbage became kapusta; cabbage-pork soup and cabbage was also made into golabki - cabbage leaves stuffed with rice and meat. On Fridays, which were fast days, barzcz, a tart beet soup, or potato soup was served with sour cream. Polish kielbasa was everyone’s favorite and became an American dish.

* Rugs which my mother made 60 years ago are still being used in my kitchen today.

Shopping

The saying, “money is to be used wisely,” was taught to everyone in the family. Polish ladies were known to be thrifty... but not miserly. When gifts were given, they were very generous ones.

Some shopping was done at the house when peddlers came with bakery products and fruit. The Fuller Brush and Raleigh salesmen came regularly. Because Mama could not read, the family had an unexpected experience with a Raleigh product. One day the cake she usually made was rejected by the boys, saying it tasted funny. Mother was puzzled so she took out the bottle of vanilla flavoring. It was labeled, “Cough Medicine”. The mystery was solved. Everyone laughed. The two bottles, vanilla and cough medicine, were identical in size and color. Of course, that bottle of cough medicine was taken straight to the bathroom cabinet.

Shopping from the Sears Roebuck catalogue was very convenient. Certain shopping was done on Millbury street in Worcester from Polish merchants. Little by little the ladies learned about Worcester and shopped on Main Street. I still do not know how Mama learned about Healy’s and Ulian’s clothing stores. She insisted that both she and I would now buy the better quality clothes which had lasting styles.

One afternoon Mother was surprised to see two English ladies from Elmwood Street knocking on her kitchen door. She recognized Mrs. Earnshaw. They were collecting for the District Nursing Association. Mother understood that nursing was important and, with broken English, she offered them a donation. They returned every year. When my father died, a beautiful flower arrangement and a note of sympathy came from Mr. and Mrs. Earnshaw.

Perhaps some of the Polish ladies did not have the advantage of reading and writing, but they did have the God-given sense of living a life of hard work and Christian charity to pass on to their children.

Businesses and Professions

The needs of the immigrants soon necessitated the establishment of businesses and professions. The most notable were:

John Kalisz	Bakery	River Ave., Farnumsville
Vincent Czerwonka	Market	Providence Rd., Farnumsville
Adam Pietruszka	Market	Providence Rd., Farnumsville
Stanley Stopyra	Market	Wilkinsonville
Frank Klocek	General Store	Cross St., Farnumsville
Anthony Szajna	Klondike Inn	Providence Rd. Farnumsville
Anthony Popek	Cobbler	Providence Rd., Northbridge
Josephine Kuras	Beautician	Main St., Fisherville
Josephine Krula	Bakery	Main St., Farnumsville
John Lysik	Turkey & Chicken Farm	Saundersville
Rev. John Czerwonka	Priest, St. Stanilaw Parish	Fall River, Mass.

Polish Customs and Traditions

It was only natural that the Polish customs which the immigrants grew up with were dear to their hearts. They continued to celebrate the holidays in their own traditions.

Christmas

The center of the Christmas tradition was the oplatek, a thin wafer of bread which is imprinted with a religious scene. These wafers are so important in the Polish tradition that wherever a Pole is in the world, the wafer is shared as a pledge of love and family unity. Even today these wafers are enclosed in Christmas cards which are sent around the world.

For the family, the Christmas eve, Wigilia, dinner was the long-awaited event. Because the day before Christmas was a fast day, the many courses had to be meatless. Mother spent the day in the kitchen with last minute cooking. Father prepared the Christmas tree in the parlor, dressing it with huge oranges, and shiny apples from his own trees, which he hung on the thick, inner branches of the tree. By afternoon we children were eager to trim the tree with lights, dainty balls and tinsel. The fragrance of the tree permeated the house.

The dining room table was extended by inserting the two extra boards to accommodate not only the family, but also invited guests. The familiar saying was, "Guest in the house, Christ in the house".

When the first star appeared, it signaled the start of dinner. Father and mother gave out an oplatek to each child and guest, offering a blessing or perhaps a suggestion to correct a certain fault. Each child and guest shared his/her oplatek and also wished good fortune.

The first course was barzcz, a beet soup flavored with dill and mushrooms.* Soups were served with rye bread which had a special meaning. A tiny bit of bread was to be left beside one's dish to insure plenty of food for the coming year. The second course, kapusta, was cabbage soup flavored with onions and peas.

The serving of pierogi, filled turnovers, was the highlight of Christmas. Fillings of cabbage or cheese or potatoes could be enjoyed with soured cream. When dimes were made of pure silver, mother hid some into certain pierogi for luck, and it was a delight when we found them.

A compote of prunes, raisins and dried fruit was served with baked rice/apple pudding as dessert. Dainty chrusciki, fried love knots with powdered sugar on them was a delicacy.

After the dishes were cleared away, Polish and English Christmas carols were sung. If one played an instrument, as in my family, the evening was highlighted with music. The elders went to Midnight Mass. We children hung our cotton stockings around the big, black Glenwood stove, away from the firebox. In the morning we usually found candy, nuts and small presents, like a jackknife or a harmonica in them. On Christmas morning, after Mass, larger presents were found under the tree. The food on Christmas day was ham, kielbasa with all the fixings. As so often happened, we dined on the much-loved, left-over pierogi.

The day after Christmas was St. Stephan's Day, honoring the first martyr of the Church. On that day we children were given a container of oats and told to visit our cousins and neighbors to shower their kitchens with oats while saying:

Na szczescie, na zdrowie,
Na Swietego Stefana.

For luck, for good health,
In honor of St. Stephan.

Most ladies begged us not to throw the tiny oats which were difficult to sweep up. They thanked us for the wishes and gave us dimes, and we left. The following day was the feast of St. John which was celebrated with wine.

*The search for wild mushrooms in the South Grafton area was one of the exciting past times of the Polish ladies. In July or August, after a warm rain or in muggy weather, the mushrooms would appear overnight under birch or oak trees in tall grass or in moss. The area of Dead Pond was a good place to find them as well as the reservoir on the hill. Some grew along the railroad tracks. These mushrooms could be prepared for immediate use or dried to enhance their flavor and saved for Christmas.

Easter

During the long Lenten season Mother sang the sad hymn Gorzkie Zale (Bitter Sorrows). We children had say daily the following prayer:

Ktorys cierpial za nas rany,
Jezu Chryste, zmiluj sie nad nami

You who suffered pains for us,
Jesus Christ, have mercy on us.

Now the tone in our house changed to the anticipated joy of the Resurrection. Preparations for Easter included washing windows and hanging fresh curtains. Children were bought new clothes and shiney shoes.

The celebration actually began on Palm Sunday when the palms were brought from church. A custom of hitting each other with the palms signified Christ's beating. It was fun for the children. A single leaf of palm was cut into two pieces to form a cross which was pinned to our clothing and worn all day. Other palms were placed behind holy pictures or crucifixes and kept there all year.

Several days before Easter, eggs were hard-boiled and colored in onion skins or in beet peels. As an artistic touch some eggs were decorated using wax to make pisanki. Just before Easter, raw horseradish was grated and mixed with grated spiced beets. This was a tasty complement to the ham and kielbasa and is still traditional for Easter in a Polish home.

Lenten fast ended at noon on Holy Saturday. Aromas of ham and kielbasa filled the kitchen. Babka, (Easter bread) with raisins was baking in the oven sending its aroma throughout the house. This special Easter babka contrasted greatly with our daily rye bread.

Tradition called for a priest to bless the food, but we were far from a Polish parish, so father or mother took a palm, poured holy water from Holy Saturday's Mass on it, and blessed the food and the whole family before eating our Easter dinner. The first food we were given was a tiny piece of raw, bitter horseradish to remind us of the vinegar and gall that Christ was given.

After dinner the Champion Egg contest was held. Each person chose one of the colorful eggs, and would tap the other person's egg to find out which shell was stronger. By process of elimination, a Champion Egg was declared to the delight of the winner.

A Polish Wedding

When I was young in the 1930's, a Polish wedding was a source of excitement that was shared by the whole family. The wedding lasted two days. A church wedding and reception were held on Saturday, and this was followed on Sunday by a party hosted at the bride's home. This party was called poprawiny which means improvement.

On Saturday morning close relatives assembled at the bride's home. A three-piece orchestra greeted guests with traditional wedding music. Then a most tender scene occurred. An aunt or cousin would sing a sorrowful song to the bride, urging her to thank her parents for bringing her up. Tears flowed abundantly with a mixture of sentiments, for she was leaving her parents' home.

A caravan of cars left the house for the church. The bride and her father were driven in the best car which a member of the family loaned to them for the occasion. The groom and his best man and ushers were in church. The bride's guests usually sat on the left and the groom's guests were seated on the right. The solemnity of the marriage vows impressed everyone with the seriousness of the future of the young couple. As Mass was ending, a couple of ladies distributed confetti to people to shower the bride and groom as they left the church. There was no receiving line at the church. That would be held at the reception. The couple and wedding party left immediately, and drove to a studio for pictures.

The parents and guests drove to the hall for the reception. Here they were greeted with a larger orchestra which included a very important instrument...a base violin, which was conspicuously placed before each arriving guest. Guests were expected to place quarters into the openings of the instrument in appreciation for the greeting.

As the bride and groom and the wedding party arrived at the hall, the two mothers greeted the bride and groom with an offering of bread and salt. The salt signified the power to cleanse and heal, and the bread signified an abundance of food for their future lives. The arrival of the wedding party was a highlight as the orchestra played the traditional Polish Wedding March* . The whole wedding party, as well as the parents of the bride and groom, sat at the head table. The best man made the toast and the feasting began. The first course was usually chicken soup, followed by a full course turkey dinner. Dessert was ice cream.

During the meal, a sudden tinkling sound of silverware against china and glass filled the hall with its din. Everyone smiled as someone yelled, "Gorzkie wino, gorzkie wino" which meant "Bitter wine, Bitter wine". In order to sweeten the wine, the groom had to kiss his bride. This occurred many times during the dinner. Sometimes it went even further. Each usher had to kiss his bridesmaid, to the cheering of all.

* See sheet music, page A-24

Tables and chairs were cleared away. The floor was sprinkled with wax and the orchestra, having enjoyed a dinner also, began playing Polish music...cheerful polkas, obereks and soothing waltzes. Our feet could not stay still.

This was the time and place for any shy boy to learn to dance. One young man asked a girl, "If you teach me to dance, I'll take you to your Junior Prom". They danced all afternoon as his steps grew shorter and quicker. A Polish wedding was often a place where young people met and fell in love. Young people cooled off with an unending supply of soda and returned for more dancing.

Suddenly, loud voices of men drew everyone's attention. Is someone fighting? What is going on? A drama unfolded beside the door to the cloak room. The best man, in jest, had just captured the bride, locked her in the room and would not surrender the key to the groom unless the groom paid him some money. Everyone was enjoying the drama. The money was paid, and the bride was released to the groom.

The Grand March

At 4:30 the wedding party entered the hall. They circled the hall three times and came down the middle to the table where a cake stood in all its beauty. Beside the cake was a plate which was covered by a napkin. The bride was now the center of attention. She took her mother's and father's arms and marched around the hall while all the guests applauded. She did the same with her new mother and father-in-law, and the guests applauded again. After that, anyone wishing to have a special dance with the bride, did so, but also placed a generous gift of money on the plate under the napkin. Occasionally, a strong man would attempt to crack the plate with his fist for good luck.

A very interesting drama occurred next. An aunt or cousin would sing a many-versed song to the bride as follows:

Drobny groch, drobny groch,
Tatarka drobnie jszo
Ladny Jasiu, ladny,
A Mania ladniejsza.

Tiny peas, tiny peas,
Grains are even smaller,
Handsome is Johnny
But Mary is lovelier.

Nie Bedziesz juz wiecej
Z chlopakami latac
Siedziec kolo pieca,
Stare portki latac.

You will no longer look
For handsome young men,
You'll sit by your fire,
Patching old pants.

Zycze ci Marysiu
Od rana do rana,
Zebys za rok miala

I wish you, Mary, dear,
From dawn to dawn,
So in a year from now,

Syna jak barana.

A healthy son you've borne.

These many-versed songs brought humor to the guests and a blush to the bride.

At 5 o'clock, all the guests formed the Grand March behind the bride and groom. They marched around the hall to the music of the traditional Polish Wedding March. The bride and groom stood before their cake and received congratulations and gifts of money. Cake was given to the ladies and a "shot" and a cigar were given to the men. The bride and groom left immediately, changed their clothes and set off on their honeymoon.

On Sunday many guests enjoyed food and drink at the home of the bride, and this ended the two days of merriment for everyone. Beyond this moment, there were memories for all, and gifts of money for the young couple as they began their married life. With the passage of time the Polish wedding customs were discontinued and became Americanized.

Organizations

Rented rooms from John Kalisz

It was natural for people to group together. At first they met in each other's homes. In 1916 they rented a few rooms at 15 Main Street from John Kalisz for \$10.00 per month. They held their meetings there, and a bar brought money in at a slow but steady pace. In 1933 a class in Polish was taught by Mr. Michalski of Worcester for the young people. Teodozya Dziadosz also helped to teach Polish.

Allen's Hall and Fisherville Hall

Large assemblies such as weddings and dances were held in Allen's Hall on 296 Providence Road or at the Fisherville Hall on Ferry Street. Money was raised by holding picnics in the summer at John Knapik's farm on 295 Providence Road, opposite Allen's hall and on the Such Farm on Providence Road. Raffles were held on many occasions: A rooster raffle was held before Thanksgiving Day and during the year raffles were for a wrist watch or a phonograph, or even a Ford Automobile.

Minutes of Early Organizations

At this point I invite the reader to "Look through a window to the past" by reading translations of meetings which will show the slow but steady growth of the Polish community. The following is the first recorded meeting.

Polish Falcons

February 4, 1916

Meeting of Group #693...Polish Falcons

Meeting was opened by A. Sitnik, President at 11:30. A list of members was read and officers elected.

F. Satlawa motioned that there be a 50¢ entrance charge. Motion was passed.

Candidates for the position of Manager were:

Anthony Szajna,
Francis Knapik
Kendrze Rej

Francis Knapik was elected.
After expenses, we have \$3.74.

Anthony Szajna motioned to plan a Ball on the Saturday
after the holiday. All agreed.

Ball Committee: Thomas Stopyra, Joseph Swidrak, John
Nadolnik, Barbara Hospod, Aniela Gajewska, Karolina Ramian

Stanley Twardzicki, Recording Secretary

The Polish National Alliance

December 3, 1916

The Polish National Alliance of Worcester announces
the establishment of a new group #1578, on March 12, 1916 in
Farnumsville, Massachusetts.

Officers are: A. Sitnik, President
J. Nowak & Josephine Solek, Vice-presidents
Michael Zajac, Treasurer
John Ragala, Financial Secretary
Stanislaw Twardzicki, Recording Secretary

Committee:
John Bucko
Roman Pytko
Albert Kuras
Maryanne Stefanczyk

Manager: Jan Nadolnik
Assist. Manager: Stanley Stopyra

Seventy-seven persons became members. Meetings will be held
on the first Sunday of each month.

Entrance fee: 50¢

(signed) Stanislaw Twardzicki,
Recording Secretary

December 2, 1917

Meeting was held in the club in Northbridge,
Massachusetts. Opened by John Radkiewicz, Vice-President.

New Officers for 1918 are:
John Zelek, President
John Radkiewicz, Vice-President
Joseph Kozlowski, Treasurer
Andrew Batko, Financial Secretary

A Recording Secretary will be chosen at the next

meeting which will be held at the home of Anthony Mularczyk.
Temporary Secretary, Andrew Batko

The Polish Citizens Committee

The first meeting of the Polish Citizens Committee of Northbridge, Farnumsville, and Fisherville, Massachusetts was organized on January 5, 1919 for the purpose of humanitarian assistance for our Fatherland, Poland.

- I. Membership Fees, 50¢
Declaration for Charity
Collecting from homes by a committee

- II. An obligation of Solidarnosc* (solidarity) with other Polish groups. To participate in political and economic current matters. To urge members in active participation

- III. Duties of Administration of the Polish Citizens Committee:
 - A. To maintain regular meetings

 - B. Financial secretary to collect monthly dues from members and turn them over to Treasurer. To keep records of all monies and report them at each monthly meeting

 - C. Treasurer's obligation to handle all monies, bank them and report at each meeting.

 - D. Duties of Recording Secretary to write minutes of each meeting

 - E. Duties of Directors: to have control of the whole committee. To call a special meeting if an important situation occurs.

 - F. Collectors are obligated to visit Polish homes and collect dues. Each donor will be listed on a separate card with full name, date of donation and amount.

 - G. Members who are present at meetings may make motions for the interest of our organization.
Payment of 50¢ per month will be divided as follows:
80% for Polish cause
20% for our fund
Duties of members are to participate in meeting discussions, getting new members and further the interest and economical needs of Poland.

*The word solidarity evidently has had a deep meaning and a long-standing tradition in Polish heritage. This concept helped to forge the path to independence.

Kazimiesz Przybyla called upon the Tadeusz Kosciuszko Band to play a sentimental Polish song.

J. Twardzicki invited all local Polish organizations present to join in humanitarian aid to our beloved Poland.

Officers elected: Kazimiesz Przybyla, President
Joseph Podsiadlo, Vice-president
Wojciech Kuras, Treasurer
W. Kosiba, Financial Secretary
Jozef Betlej, Recording Secretary

Directors: Peter Lubas, Julian Rybicki, Joseph Koziol,
Vincent Obara, P. Tecza, Stanley Twardzicki,
Zygmund Wawrzekiewicz

Jan Czyzewicz, Secretary

The following meeting is one of the most interesting and important ones.

1919

Record of the meeting on July 13, 1919 and the semi-annual account of the Council of the Polish Citizens Committee:

Chairman K. Przybyla opened the meeting. He called upon Jozef Kraus who spoke over one hour in great detail telling of the critical time that Poland is now experiencing...the most critical since Kosciuszko's time. He spoke about the "flower of Polish youth" who gave their lives. Many of the audience wiped tears. He further reminded the audience of the many orphans and widows of Polish heroes. These helpless victims need food and clothing, so our aid is vital.

Eighty-five persons donated from \$1.00 to \$22.00 which totaled \$600.00 to be sent to the Polish Consulat in New York and then to the Main Relief Agency in Warsaw.

These people never forgot where they came from nor what and whom they left behind.

Aid to the Republic of Poland

Further aid to Poland was an appeal offering Polish Bonds for the new Republic of Poland. Amounts from \$50.00 to \$200.00, by 135 persons totaled \$8650.00.

At this point it is important to list the name as they appeared of those who bought bonds; not only to show their generosity, but because it is vital information that lists the families who lived here and in Northbridge in 1919.

Purchase of Polish Bonds

Antoni Szajna	\$200.00	Wladyslaw Koruna	\$50.00
Stanislaw Radoniewicz	\$150.00	Walery Krula	\$50.00
Jozef Koziol	\$150.00	Szyman Prostack	\$50.00
Roman Koczwanski	\$150.00	Teodozja Dziadosz	\$50.00
Stanislaw Socha	\$200.00	Jozef Podsiadlo	\$50.00
Stanislaw Szajna	\$100.00	Stanislaw Dawicki	\$50.00
Maryjanna Szajna	\$100.00	Jozef Majcher	\$50.00
Jozef Swisz	\$100.00	Antoni Beker	\$50.00
Leon Kowal	\$100.00	Jan Sklarski	\$50.00
Jozef Wasiuk	\$100.00	Wojciech Roszkowicz	\$50.00
Antoni Politowski	\$100.00	Kazimiesz Przybyla	\$50.00
Andrzej Batko	\$100.00	Antonina Przybyla	\$50.00
Piort Lukaszewicz	\$100.00	Jozef Przybyla	\$50.00
Jozef Such	\$100.00	Wanda Przybyla	\$50.00
Zofija Linek	\$100.00	Franciszek Wenc	\$50.00
Anna Mazur	\$100.00	Jozef Rokacz	\$50.00
Karol Wenc	\$100.00	Jan Hospod	\$50.00
Adam Sudnik	\$100.00	Katazyna Hospod	\$50.00
Jozef Starsiak	\$100.00	Teofila Ciepla	\$50.00
Antonina Zastawna	\$100.00	Marcin Kuzydlo	\$50.00
Piort Dubiel	\$100.00	Antoni Rybicki	\$50.00
Jozef Berkowicz	\$100.00	Michal Szarek	\$50.00
Maryjanna Bielik	\$100.00	Stanislaw Stopyra	\$50.00
Jan Aszkiewicz	\$100.00	Marcin Kuras	\$50.00
Jozef Klocek	\$100.00	Jan Linek	\$50.00
Jozef Politowski	\$100.00	Piort Michalski	\$50.00
Franciszek Koziol	\$100.00	Julijan Rybicki	\$50.00
Jozef Zabicki	\$100.00	Franciszek Pysz Klin	\$50.00
Piort Szerlag	\$100.00	Maryjanna Pysz Klin	\$50.00
Jozef Swidrak	\$100.00	Jan K. Knapik	\$50.00
Wicynty Czerwonka	\$100.00	Jozef Tazynski	\$50.00
Stanislaw Sowa	\$50.00	Apolonia Syty	\$50.00
Piort Kurek	\$50.00	Wojciech Wojnar	\$50.00
Franciszek Zajac	\$50.00	Tomasz Stopyra	\$50.00
Ludwik Rutana	\$50.00	Kostanty Branowicki	\$50.00
Ignacy Buczynski	\$50.00	Jan Gerasimowicz	\$50.00
Konstanty Wenc	\$50.00	Jan Opatka	\$50.00
Wojciech Kuras	\$50.00	Jan Nadolnik	\$50.00
Jan Rutana	\$50.00	Kamela Mularczyk	\$50.00
Wladyslaw Siepietowski	\$50.00	Andrzej Serwa	\$50.00
Franciszek Kos	\$50.00	Franciszek Wachuta	\$50.00
Jozef Garczarski	\$50.00	Jozef Wojnar	\$50.00
Jan Zelek	\$50.00	Jozef Betlej	\$50.00
Wladyslaw Fiedzink	\$50.00	Michal Buba	\$50.00
Weronika Werana	\$50.00	Franciszek Gniadek	\$50.00
Jan Knapik	\$50.00	Andrzej Pietraszek	\$50.00
Jan Olifirko	\$50.00	Jozef Krol	\$50.00
Jozef Filor	\$50.00	Andrzej Zurek	\$50.00
Maryjanna Soboj	\$50.00	Andrzej Rej	\$50.00

Jan Stefanczyk	\$50.00	Jan Pilch	\$50.00
Jan Stefanczyk	\$50.00	Jan Pilch	\$50.00
Maryjanna Januszczuk	\$50.00	Wladyslaw Wesolowski	\$50.00
Jan Tomkiewicz	\$50.00	Zofia Glowala	\$50.00
Wladyslaw Januszczuk	\$50.00	Jan Pastor	\$50.00
Antoni Michniewicz	\$50.00	Jan Ramian	\$50.00
Alex Pietruszkiewicz	\$50.00	Julijan Romanowski	\$50.00
Piort Kuczynski	\$50.00	Antoni Lukaszewski	\$50.00
Piort Buzan	\$50.00	Franciszek Szerlag	\$50.00
Agata Kaczor	\$50.00	Jan Szerlag	\$50.00
Kaszmiesz Ratkiewicz	\$50.00	Szyman Such	\$50.00
Maryjanna Dubiel	\$50.00	Michal Michalski	\$50.00
Jan Czyzewicz	\$50.00	Agnieszka Maj	\$50.00
Piort Szerlag	\$50.00	Jozefa Stefanczyk	\$50.00
Wojciech Kosiba	\$50.00	Piort Lubas	\$50.00
Ignacy Lukaszewski	\$50.00	Wojciech Dubiel	\$50.00
Franciszek Klocek	\$50.00	Jan Chuchowski	\$50.00
Miarcin Palas	\$50.00	Pawel Dubiel	\$50.00
Stefan Poluanczyk	\$50.00	Jozef Szeliga	\$50.00
Jan Matuszek	\$50.00	Jan Radkiewicz	\$50.00

Building The Club

The Search for Land

November 24, 1929

The meeting was opened by Chairman Frank Klocek who introduced a guest speaker named Mr. Czarnole. He spoke about the feasibility of building a hall for our social functions.

Chairman Klocek requested comments from the assembled people.

A temporary Building Committee was chosen:

John Nadolnik

Frank Klocek

Thomas Bien

Peter Dubiel

Olympia Such

February 19, 1930

Meeting was opened by Frank Klocek. It was agreed that he and John Nadolnik go to Northbridge on February 21 to speak to the Poles about the hope of building a Home in Farnumsville.

A special meeting will be held on March 9 at 2:00 in Allen's Hall.

Items to be discussed:

1. Purchase of Allen's Hall and land.
2. Inquire how much a lot owned by Mr. King would cost. This lot is located opposite the Such property.
3. Mr. Dubiel will ask Mr. Barney about the cost of a lot across from the filling station.**

Incorporation and Charter

March 9, 1930

Meeting was called to order in Allen's Hall by Frank Klocek at 2:30. Guest speaker was Mr. Trukowski from Worcester who explained the advantages of the Polish people having their own building. He explained that because of his experience in Worcester, he would be willing to assist us in setting up necessary rules and regulations.

"The primary issue is to incorporate. After we receive a Charter, then the Committee can raise money through membership and work for a profit in any other way."

The crowd, after listening to Mr. Trukowski, agreed to go forward. Joseph Podsiadlo motioned that a Building Committee be formed to expedite this:

Committee:

Frank Klocek, President
John Matuszek, Vice-president
Thomas Bien, Secretary
Walter Such, Financial Secretary
Kazimiesz Ratkiewicz, Treasurer

Board of Directors:

Thomas Obara
John Knapik
Anthony Krol
Peter Dubiel
Julian Rybicki

**Cumberland Farms today

March 30, 1930

The purpose of this meeting was the further discussion about forming a Constitution and building our Home. After reading the Constitutions of the Worcester and Chicopee groups, it was agreed that these would be suitable for our needs.

Motion by John Matuszek that our association be called The Polish National Home Association*. Motion was passed.

It was also agreed that Thomas Obara and Julian Rybicki learn from Polish lawyers in Worcester how to effect our need and how much it will cost for incorporation.

A cost per Share in our organization is set at \$25.00 per Share.

(Cost for lawyer's work was \$75.00.)

July 25, 1930

Report of meeting of the Building Committee of the Polish Home, held July 25, 1930. Seven members attended. John Matuszek reported that when we have our Home, several Polish organizations wish to hold their meetings there.

Search for a location has been delayed until after we are issued our Charter.

A letter from the Grafton Selectmen was read. They requested that all officers be present at their meeting of August 4 for a discussion of our plans.

Thomas Obara suggested that before we attend this meeting, we speak with our attorney, Mr. Siarkiewicz for his opinion. Walter Such offered to do so.

At this time some of the young men, born of the early immigrants became involved in helping their parents who were struggling with the English language and the laws of the land. Records show that Walter Such, Vincent Wenc, Walter Bien, John Kuras, Walter Misiaszek, Henry Such and Stanley Knapik worked very hard.

* No connection to the Polish National Church

The Selection of a Building Lot / The Work Begins

The following information was taken from the minutes of the meeting:

June 30, 1934

Kalisz garage and land, River Ave. available at \$3500.00

George Messier land, Providence Rd & Cross St., (too small)

Peter Dubiel, Land, Cross St., \$800.00

Barney's large land, Main St., opposite filling station,
(now Cumberland Farms) \$2500.000

Voters, 30 for Barney's land; 11 for Dubiel's land

Barney's land was chosen.

August 25, 1934

President F. Klocek opened the meeting at 8:30, before 34 Shareholders. He reported our progress to date.

John Matuszek read figures of a contractor from Webster, showing the proposed plans for the Home.

Walter Such motioned and seconded by John Linek to begin building. Twenty-four voted for building; 10 Against.

Agreement was reached to begin building but to finish the hall upstairs at a later date. It was urged that we do not go into more debt than \$5,000.00.

It was also suggested to contact a second architect to look over the plans we have, to confirm what is good and perhaps add whatever may be lacking. This to be done by F. Klocek, W. Such and John Matuszek.

Meeting ended at 11:30. p.m.

Albert Kuras, Recording Sec.

September 9, 1934

Letters were read from three foundation contractors. Ciela from Webster was the lowest. It was suggested that we speak with him.

He came with his sons. We spoke for a long time. We asked him to write up his contract and to return here for the signing.

Albert Kuras, Rec. Sec.

September 28, 1934

Payment for the digging of the foundation and the well were taken up and taken care of.

Plans for an Electrician will be the responsibility of Henry Such. Albert Kuras suggested buying a crystal light for the hall.

Sand and gravel from the digging of the foundation will be given to Julian Rybicki and Mr. Pastor.

It was also agreed that any person who wishes to work a whole day be given a shot of liquor at the end of the day.

Building contractor will be A. J. Konkol of Webster. Contract was signed on September 29, 1934 by President, Frank Klocek, Vice-President, John Matuszek and Kazimiesz Ratkiewicz.

The contract stipulated that the building must be completed by December 30, 1934.

Albert Kuras, Rec. Sec.

The plans of the building were very efficient. The side-front door led to the barroom by which one entered with a key of his own. The rear-side door led to a central, inner room from which one could enter other rooms, namely a large room for meetings and small gatherings, a Shower Room, men's room, a kitchen and ladies room, and the barroom. A staircase led to the upstairs hall, which would be built later.

November 8, 1934

At the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Polish National Home Association, the Directors present were, Thomas Obara, Julian Rybicki, Stanley Matuszek, Joseph Wojnar and Joseph Koziol.

Our Club is to borrow \$6,000.00 (six thousand dollars) from Julian and Barbara Rybicki and give them a first mortgage on the premises of the Association, and that the Treasurer and Financial Secretary be authorized to make acknowledgment and deliver, on behalf of the Association, good and sufficient deed and note of the same.

Voting, A motion was made by Joseph Wojnar, seconded by Thomas Obara to borrow \$6,000.00 from Julian and Barbara Rybicki. The result of voting was, five votes in favor, none against.

A motion was made by Julian Rybicki to authorize the Treasurer and Financial Secretary to make acknowledgment and receive the said sum of money on behalf of the Association. This

motion was passed unanimously.

Thomas Obara, Clerk of
The Board of Directors

November 24, 1934

We have used 91 bags of cement at 70¢ each for the foundation.

December 9, 1934

At a meeting of all Shareholders two items were discussed, 1. Heating and completion of the whole building. 2. Thomas Bien proposed that each Shareholder lend money for the completion. Joe Wojnar proposed that no one should be forced to lend money.

The following group willingly promised money without interest:

Thomas Bien	\$200.00
Joseph Wojnar	100.00
John Knapik (elder)	100.00
Helena Baran	100.00
John Knapik (younger)	100.00
Stanley Matuszek	100.00
John Matuszek	100.00
Michael Branowicki	100.00
Frank Klocek	100.00
Walter Bien	100.00
Adam Pietruszka	100.00
Joseph Koziol	100.00
Antonia Zastawna	100.00
Albert Kuras	100.00
Julian Rybicki	100.00
John Kalisz	50.00
	<u>\$1650.00</u>

December 18, 1934

Contract price of our plumber, Mr. Kindler, is \$1800.00 which was the lowest bid for a very good furnace.

At this point many more Polish people bought shares and increased the flow of money.

Completion Of The Home and The Grand Opening

Jan. 8, 1935

Committee chosen, Joseph Wojnar, Thomas Bien and Stanley Knapik.

Three hundred tickets to be sold for \$1.00 each.

We are to contact the various companies whom we have hired to donate money for advertising space in our program booklet.

We are to invite lawyer, Mr. Siarkiewicz and lawyer Durham

as honored guests.

Music in charge of John Halko. Program to start at 1:00 and banquet at 4:00.

Jan. 24, 1935

After a short discussion about our program for the Grand Opening, it was agreed that the Polish Scouts will sing the Polish hymn and the American hymn and scout songs.

Speakers will be invited guests.

Financial Pressures

March 31, 1935

During the past year the incidental expenses such as curtains, chairs, tables, kitchen equipment fans, glasses etc...drained the treasury to \$889.80.

Cost of the building to date is \$14,032.52. A committee was formed to go house to house asking for loans without interest. President Klocek closed the meeting by thanking heartily all those present who have paid for their shares in full.

J. Rybicki, Recording Sec.

April 26, 1935

Thirty-eight new Shareholders are added. Mr. Konkel reported that to finish the upstairs hall will cost \$1888.00.

Plumber estimates cost upstairs at \$666.00.

Financial report reads our total to date, \$685.53.

Frank Klocek reported that the agent from the Lumber Company agrees to furnish the material to finish the hall by accepting payments without interest.

July 5, 1935

Semi-annual meeting of the Polish National Home Association discussed our Grand Opening plans.

Committee Chosen:

Ladies:	Anna Klocek	Men:	Frank Klocek
	Mrs. Radzik		Walter Such
	Helena Bien		John Mutuszek

E. Ratkiewicz
A. Bien
A. Zastawna

Thomas Obara
Stanley Knapik

July 31, 1935

Work is accelerating toward Grand Opening to be on September 8, 1935. A two-day affair. Ball on Saturday evening and a Banquet on Sunday.

Tickets for the Ball, 50¢. Tickets for the Banquet on Sunday \$1.00.

Invitations to all Polish Organizations are to be sent.

Last Minute preparations:

A Welcoming Committee chosen: Frank Klocek
Stanley Matuszek
Apolonia Bien
Maryanna Dubiel

Invitations and a ticket sent to Mr. Barney.

Decoration of hall, Walter Bien and Apolonia Bien

Purchase of Piano, chairs, fans and stage curtain from Mr. Konkel for \$260.00

Thomas Obara was asked to write a brief history of our Club.

Grand Opening

The Polish National Home Association

Sunday, September 8, 1935

Farnumsville, Massachusetts

Program

Welcome by Vice-President John Matuszek

Singing by Polish Scouts

Speaker: Chairman of the Banquet Committee

Singing by Polish Scouts

Recitation by Mary Majkut

Speaker: Mr. Frank M. Jablonski

Recitation by Anna Knapik

Speaker: Mr. J. Dzura

Singing by Polish Scouts

Speaker: The Honorable Charles Hurley

Speaker: Mr. John J. Siarkiewicz

Finale: Singing by Polish Scouts

Speaker: The Honorable John S. Derham

Advertisers

Of special interest are the names of advertisers from the local area as well as the Worcester area which appeared in the Program Booklet.

Atlas Distributing Corp., Worcester	With Compliments of: Harry H. Daw
Edward Karolkiewicz, Undertaker, Worcester	Mrs. Grace G. Dempton
Riverside Spa, Bridge St., North Grafton	Bradbury-Locke Company, Lumber, Milford
Chabot Motor Sales, Millbury	Auto Wrecking, L. Klocek, Northbridge
Millbury Furniture Co., Worcester	Kosciuszko's Vegetables and Milk, Grafton
H. K. B. Bakery, J. Elkinson, Woonsocket, R.I.	Jablonski and Siarkiewicz, Attorney, Worcester
Nadolny's Bakery, Worcester	John Barney, Package Store, Farnumsville
New Deal Cafe, Millbury	White Eagle Bottling Co., Webster
Fiske Farms, Keith Hill, Grafton	Grafton Inn, Henry Harper, Grafton
Edward M. Casey, Insurance, Saundersville	George W. Rice.Co., Millbury & Northbridge
Lynch Garage, Farnumsville	Dodge Mill Co., Saundersville
J. Lapiere & Son, Insurance, Farnumsville	Clover Farm Stores, Guilmette Bros., Fisherville
Norman Prout, Florist, Grafton	Twilight Ramblers, Entertainers, Webster
Oliver M. Wing, Insurance, Grafton	Keown's Orchard, Sutton
South End Fuel Co., J. Hinchcliffe, Fisherville	Fisherville Garage, Leon Perrott, Fisherville
John F. Woodward, Three Oaks, Grafton	Goldenrod Market, Stanley Stopyra, Wilkinstonville
Valley Oil and Ice Co., A. Dumas, Fisherville	Kindler's Hardware, Webster
Grafton Center Garage, George Jordan & Son, Grafton	Henry Such, Contractor, Farnumsville
Solomon Glazer, Worcester	Leonard Allen Filling Station, Farnumsville
Klocek's General Store, Cross St., Farnumsville	S. Ciborowski, Insurance, Worcester
Boutiette's General Store, Farnumsville	Gaudette Brothers, Insurance, Grafton
Lynch Pharmacy, Farnumsville	South Grafton Laundry, Farnumsville
Art Studio, Worcester	Valley Dairy, Fisherville
X. Cadrin, Farnumsville	A. Szajna, Klondike Inn, Farnumsville
Hall's Radio Service, Farnumsville	Patridge Paint Co., Worcester
Gauthier's Store, Cross St., Fisherville	G. J. Bullock, Insurance, Farnumsville
Shell Service Station, Main St., Farnumsville	Adam Pietruszka, Grocery, Farnumsville
Vincent Czerwonka, Grocery, Farnumsville	Meat Leon Himself, Farnumsville
General Electric Supply Co., Worcester	Blackstone Potato Chip Co., Blackstone, Ma.
J. Konkel, Contractor, Webster	The Baillargeon Printery, Millbury
H. O'Brien, Liquors, Blackstone, Ma.	Ernest LeMaire, Decorator and Anna LeMaire, C Nurse

November, 1936

An item of special interest was the donation by Mr. Harry Daw of a large bookcase for the meeting room.

Total Costs

December 30, 1935, Total Costs

The Building:

Contractor	\$10,299.46
Plumber	3,282.50
Electricity	505.10
Painting	341.06
	<u>14,428.12</u>
Land	2,500.00
Total	\$16,928.12

Other Expenses:

The Well	\$470.89
Gas Stove	126.20
Supplies	578.15
Outdoor Work	164.13
Foundation	2,500.00
Total	<u>\$3,839.37</u>

Community Activities at the Polish National Home

After the Ball and Banquet a sense of pride in their achievement was enjoyed by all who contributed in a small or large way to this final goal. The Polish community now became a visible part of the Town of Grafton.

Selectman Henry MacNamara, Sr.

One of the most helpful persons was Selectman and Chief of Police, Henry MacNamara, Sr. who helped with ideas and introductions. Political rallies were held there to acquaint the Polish people with the candidates. He was also instrumental in contacting congressmen when the need arose. His memory should be held in high regard by the Polish people of South Grafton.

Polish Choral Concerts and Polish Scouts

Various activities now took place. The Polish choral group performed concerts. Children enrolled in the Harczerze, a Polish scout organization. Classes in Polish were taught by Pan (Mr.) Wilk of Worcester during the summer vacation. Bridal Showers and Wedding Receptions took place in our own hall. The Entertainment Committee held dances regularly. It was important at this time to maintain the Club because, indeed, it was still in need of good officers and workers. The debts had to be paid.

Use by non-Polish Organizations

Records show that the hall was used for meetings and social functions by shareholders at a minimum charge. Non-shareholders and non-Polish organizations were charged a slightly higher price. Even though their treasury was low, certain charities in the area were given the use of the hall at no charge, namely, The Teachers' Association, The Massachusetts State Guard, The Fisherville School, The Grafton Police Department, The Grafton Veterans Organization, Saint James Church and others.

Donations to Charity

Records also show that donations were given annually to charitable organizations such as, The American Red Cross, The Salvation Army, The Little League, Polio Fund, Cancer Drive, Polish Red Cross in England, Immigration Committees. in New York, The Grafton High School and The South Grafton Athletic Field.

Financial Problems

The following minutes of the meeting of October 28, 1937 show a very important financial situation.

October 28, 1937

A special meeting was called regarding our financial situation.

President John Matuszek opened the meeting. Vice-president Frank Klocek and Henry Podsiadlo, Director, attended.

John Matuszek informed all that our debt of \$6,000.00 to Barbara and Julian Rybicki is long over-due.

Joseph Wojnar motioned, seconded by Joseph Koziol to repay the entire debt. All agreed. Three men were selected to do so:

John Matuszek
Thomas Obara
Joseph Wojnar

However In the Grafton bank we have only \$5,297.23. It was agreed to take out loans without interest for no longer than six months.

Loans were willingly given by:

Joseph Wojnar	\$100.00
Thomas Obara	\$100.00
John Kuras	\$100.00
John Halko	\$100.00

Anthony Greczel	\$100.00
John Czabotar	<u>\$100.00</u>
Total loans	\$600.00

In the bank:	\$5,290.00
Treasurer has	<u>880.00</u>
	\$6,170.00
Repay loan	<u>6,000.00</u>
	170.00
Pay Interest	<u>165.00</u>
Balance Today	\$5.00

Thomas Obara, Rec. Sec.

The Children of Immigrants Grow Up

By the 1930's the children of immigrants were growing up. Many more of them took an interest in the Club. They attended meetings, served on committees and held offices. Listed in the minutes of the meetings are Albert Ratkiewicz, Theodore Knapik, Zygmund Knapik, Alexander Pawelczyk, Frank Podsiadlo, Henry Podsiadlo, Stanley Zastawny, John Wasiuk, Stanley Matuszek and Frank Obara.

The young men enjoyed playing basketball in the hall and organized the Polish Tigers Baseball team. Members of the baseball team were* :

J. Pelczarski	Stanley Matuszek	Henry Podsiadlo
H. Zionc	Louis Nadolink	Walter Such
Walter Bien	Henry Such	Stanley Zastawny
Ted Klocek	Walter "Pat" Baran	Vincent "Hank" Wenc
P. Pelczarski	C. Kroll	Walter "Willie" Obara

In the 1940's while some of these players still appeared in the Polish Tigers' lineup, some of the following new faces appeared:

Pete May	Jim Woodburn	Stan Linek
Dominic "Chet" Kuras	Stanley Kuras	Bill Wenc

The Fisherville ballpark was an exciting place where young and old turned out on a Sunday afternoon to watch their own boys play. Young ladies who had eyes for some young men called out cheers from the grandstand.

* See photo, page A-13

Many boys went to the Worcester Boys Trade School and became plumbers, carpenters, welders or machinists and girls went to the Worcester Girls Trade School. Many young people went to Grafton High School and some went on to business schools. Very few went on to a four-year college.

The Younger-Set Organization

On April 28, 1939, at a meeting of the Polish National Home the young men asked permission to hold dances every Wednesday evening. The elders suggested that they become an organized group as others had done and they became "The Younger-Set".

The Wednesday night dances proved to be a social and financial success. Young people came from the Blackstone Valley...from Worcester to Woonsocket, Rhode Island. It was the era of the "Big Band" sound...Tommy Dorsey, Glenn Miller, Benny Goodman and others.

The Polish Club had its own big band in Stanley Koziol's orchestra called the Wisla Orchestra* which is the Polish name for the Vistula River which flows from the Carpathian mountains through the heart of Poland and empties into the Baltic Sea. The Wisla Orchestra was made up of local young men, even some whose fathers had played in the early Tadeusz Kosciuszko Orchestra. They were:

Stan Koziol	Accordion	Joe Fudali	Trumpet
Ted Obara	Clarinet/Saxophone	Hap Saunders	Drums
Joe Normandin	Clarinet/Saxophone	Harry Mitchell	Piano
Fred Boutiette	Tenor Saxophone	Stan Opatka	Base Fiddle
Earl Brown	Trumpet	Al Plouffe	Drums (occasionally)

It is humorous to note that in the minutes of one of the meetings at this time, one of the officers remarked that the cost of electricity to run the Wednesday dances was high. This was resolved by purchasing colored bulbs for the "Crystal Light" which not only saved money, but created a lovely, shaded atmosphere for dancing.

Polish Picnics

A Polish Picnic was fun for young and old. A platform was built to accommodate an orchestra and dancing area. The location was in a nearby wooded lot in a quiet place. The earliest picnics were on the John Knapik farm or the Such farm. Later the spot on the property of "Tony" Szajna on Milford Road was a convenient place. Polish foods... pierori, golabki and kielbasa with sauerkraut always tasted better outdoors.

During the time of Prohibition, when liquor in the United States was banned, the solution was cleverly accomplished with a touch of humor. A short distance away from the dancing and food was a place called "Canada". Here a man was considered to be in Canada where he could purchase the drink of his choice.

In the early 1940's Polish picnics were held in many places along the Blackstone Valley. Many young men had their first car, and would start at the Szajna grove and check out the

* See photo, page A-18

orchestra and the crowd there. Then they would drive to Plummer's Corner for the same purpose and would drive on to Uxbridge and Millville if necessary until they found a picnic of their choice.

These were the "Sunshine Years" of our youth, and little did we know how much our lives would have to change in the later 1940's and what sacrifices we, the children of immigrants, would be called upon to make.

Crises

One of the crises the immigrants had to cope with was the Depression. How they dealt with it is interesting. They turned to the self-sufficiency which they remembered from childhood. They grew large vegetable gardens and fruit trees. Many families had chickens, and the larger farms had a cow. Some young people went to work in the factories, and gave their pays to the parents. Mother used the strong cloth, in which the mash and grain came for our chickens, to sew aprons and quilt covers. I also remember watching my father as he re-soled our shoes on a wrought-iron stand. When money was needed for taxes, the people took it from their savings. If a relative needed help, it was never refused. There were many hardships, but they did not seek help from "The town"...welfare.

Another crisis was the closing of the two factories in the 1930's. By this time, however, the people spoke better English and most families had an automobile. As a result, many were able to find work in neighboring towns. One advantage of the mills' closings was the auctioning of the Company houses. It was an opportunity to buy the house some of them were renting. Some also bought a second house for rental income.

The great crisis of September 1, 1939 was the day Hitler threw his Blitzkrieg across Poland. The famous Polish Cavalry was no match for tanks. The Polish community here held its breath and prayed for their loved ones in Poland. No mail could be sent or received. Only after the war did we learn about the labor camps and the extermination camps. We also heard stories of how the citizens there carried on underground activities against the Germans, and how they hid many Jewish people, at their own risk.

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 affected our entire village. My brother, John Obara was at Pearl Harbor on that "Day of Infamy". Our family experienced three days of worry until a telegram assured us that he was safe. Young men and women volunteered for the Services with accelerated zeal not only to protect our nation, but to free the Pacific and Europe. They were scattered around the world. During the war the Polish National Home was the site of many bond rallies where thousands of dollars worth of bonds were bought.

In 1969 a Plaque was created to honor those Polish men and women who served in the Armed Forces. It stands in a place of honor in front of the Polish National Home.

HONOR ROLL

WORLD WAR II

**Polish National Home Association erects this memorial to her
sons and daughters in deepest appreciation for
their services to our Country.**

* Wenc, Mitchell K.	* Korona, Boleslaw	* Joseph Obara
Baran, Walter	Krula, Joseph	Opatka, Daniel
Bielik, Adam	Krula, Stanley	Opatka, Frederic
Bien, Stanley	Krula, Thadeus	Opatka, Stanley
Branowicki, Harold	Krula, Veronica	Pastor, Frank
Branowicki, Roger	Kuras, Dominic	Pawelczyk, Alexander
Branowicki, Stanley	Kuras, Joseph	Pieklik, Henry
Chickinski, Henry	Kuras, Stanley	Pieklik, Joseph
Chickinski, Walter	Kurowski, Bernard	Pietruszkiewicz, Adam
Chosta, Bernard	Kurowski, John	Pilch, Raymond
Czebotar, John	Linek, Frank	Podsiadlo, Frank
Czerwonka, Joseph	Linek, Joseph	Podsiadlo, Henry
Filor, Raymond	Linek, Stanley	Podsiadlo, Walter
Fudali, Joseph	Lysik, Theodore	Polinski, Edward
Fudali, Walter	Matuzek, Stephen	Radoniewicz, Stanley
Halco, John	Matuzek, Olga	Radzik, Edmond
Hospod, William	Matuzek, Edwin	Radzik, Stephen
Huchowski, Walter	Matuzek, Helen	Radzik, William
Knapik Felix	Matuzek, Stanley	Ratkiewicz, Albert
Knapik, Frederick	Mercik, Chester	Rybicki, Julian
Knapik, Stanley	Michniewicz, Ralph	Rybicki, Walter
Knapik, Walter	Morris, George W.	Rybicki, William
Knapik, Zigmont	Morris, John	Stanick, Joseph
Koliss, Joseph	Murin, Henry	Such, Edward
Kosciusko, Joseph	Nadolink, Louis	Surdek, Daniel
Kostka, Stanley	Nadolink, Mitchell	Szarek, Walter
Koziol, Stanley	Nadolink, Walter	Wenc, Chester
Krol, Anthony	Obara, John	Wenc, William
Krol, Ernest	Obara, Theodore	Zastawny, Walter
	Obara, Vincent	

*Died

The first casualty was Mitchell Wenc, who died in the line of duty on March 2, 1942. A small park in the Saundersville area where he grew up bears his name, Wenc Square. The second casualty was Joseph O'Bara of Pleasant Street who died in Italy in 1944. His brother, Stanley O'Bara served in the Pacific theater and returned safely. The third casualty was Boleslaw (Bill) Korona who was killed in Germany in 1945. A special honor should be paid to the three young ladies who served in the Armed Services: Veronica Krula and sisters, Helen and Olga Matuzek.

Post-War Period

The return of the veterans was a very happy time when young men and women married and settled down. The farms were transformed into house lots and many young people were able to build their homes. Many stayed in South Grafton to take care of aging parents. It is interesting to note the children of immigrants who started their own businesses:

Walter Such	Valley Tool Company, Providence Rd.
Ted Misiaszek	Misiaszek's Funeral Parlor, Main St.
Stephen & Edwin Matuzek	Worcester Gear Works, Worcester
John L. Obara	Cascadusa Tool Co., Leominster
Daniel Opatka	Television Sales, So. Grafton
Henry & Stasia (Podsiadlo) Sareault	Sareault's Market
Ted and Helen (Podsiadlo) Klocek	General Store, Cross St.
Edward & Stephie (Kuras) Kuczinski	Town Line Dairy Farm, Upton
Kosciuszko	Vegetables & Dairy Farm, Providence Rd.
Stanley Koziol	Orchestra, Grafton
Stanley O'Bara	Centre Market, Grafton
Charles Mercik	Chicken & Egg Farm, Main St.
Ted Krula	Bakery, Main St.
Jennie (Kuras) Dumas	Beautician, Main St.
Stanley Bien	Bien Concrete Foundations, Sutton
Joseph Pieklik	Major General, retired., U. S. Army
Chester Hospod	Saunders Poultry Farm and Hospod Construction Co.

Conclusion

As I conclude this writing, I wish to share with my South Grafton friends with whom I grew up, that sentimental song which we and our parents sang. It exemplifies the heart of a Pole and the closeness we shared in life. If tears come, let them come!

Jak Szybko Mijaja Chwile

How Quickly Pass the Moments (Translation)

Jak szybko mijaja chwile,
Jak szybko plynie czas,
Jak szybko mijaja chwile,
Jak szybko plynie czas.
Za rok, za dzien, za chwile,
Razem nie bedzie nas,
Za rok, za dzien, za chwile,
Razem nie bedzie nas.

How quickly pass the moments,
How quickly flows the time,
How quickly pass the moments,
How quickly flows the time.
In a year, a day, a moment,
Together we shall not be,
In a year, a day, a moment,
Together we shall not be.

A nasze mlode lata,
Poplyna szybko w dal
A nasze mlode lata,
Poplyna szybko w dal
A w sercu pozostanie,
Tesknota, smutek, Zal,
A w sercu pozostanie,
Tesknota, smutek, Zal.

And our young years,
Flow quickly into the past,
And our young years,
Flow quickly into the past,
But in our hearts will remain,
Longingly our sad griefs,
But in our hearts will remain,
Longingly our sad griefs.

Dedication To The Next Generations

In conclusion, I address myself to the grandchildren of the immigrants who are now middle-aged. I congratulate them on their success in maintaining the Polish Club at the present time. I sincerely hope they have learned about their past relatives and will carry on some of the lovely Polish traditions.

The fourth generation Poles are already growing up. May they learn about their family histories and serve God and their fellow man as they continue in their path of self-fulfillment.

Stasia Obara Rawinski
July 1, 1998

A Final Personal Tribute

The end of World War II found Poland as a devastated, wounded land. Again she was gripped in suffering by the Russian occupation. It was only after the heroic strikes of the entire country which were led by Lech Walesa and inspired by the preaching of Rev. Jerzy Popieluszko who was murdered by the Communists, that the grip of Communism was broken. The expression and meaning of Solidarnosc (Solidarity) became a world-respected phenomenon.

The 1980's and 1990's were times for many of us to visit our relatives in Poland. What joy this brought to the relatives in Poland and to us, to meet face to face. We saw the places where our parents lived. The homes and the fields are still as they were many years ago. It felt like a step back in time.

A visit to the cemetery is a sign of respect and one is expected to place flowers on the graves of relatives. As I followed my cousins in the cemetery in Grodzisko Dolne, I saw headstones marked with familiar names...Czerwonka, Matuszek, Kuras, Hospod and others. As I stood at the graves of my maternal grandparents, Anna (Sigda) Linek and Walenty Linek, tears overflowed. I had known and loved them only from stories and pictures. I bent, placed the flowers into a container on the grave which had water in it. I picked up a handful of soil and placed it in an envelope. That Polish soil has been placed reverently on the graves of my parents in Grafton.

Stasia Obara Rawinski
July 1, 1998

The Next Generation of Polish Americans

Prologue

As a Polish American boy growing up in the 1950's and 1960's, family morals and ethnic traditions were very much a part of the learning process. Especially when you grew up next door to your grandparents. It seems there were always three different languages spoken in the house at the same time - Polish, English, and "broken English".

On Sunday nights we gazed into the future when rock 'n roll groups like the Beatles and the Rolling Stones appeared on The Ed Sullivan Show. But it was Sunday mornings when we were reminded of where we came from. The summer air would be filled with the sounds of Polkas blaring across the yard from my grandfather Stanley Mercik's table top radio. He would carry it outside, set it up next to his reclining lawn chair, and plug it in with a long extension cord leading into the house.

We always enjoyed our grandmother Anna (Lysik) Mercik retelling her story of why she married Stanley - because he had a motorcycle. It was Babcia Mercik who taught us the Polish traditions and customs of the holidays. Especially on Christmas Eve as she distributed the Oplatek sent by relatives in Poland.

My father's father, Albert Kuras, had a large Dutch Colonial farm house on Elmwood Street. As a teenage boy, my dad, Joseph A. Kuras, labored to construct the stone retaining wall in front of the house while other boys his age were having fun playing baseball. The property took on its own special charm and Polish flavor, with plenty of room for a garden, a barn, small barn animals and apple trees.

I never knew my other grandmother Aniela (Matuszek) Kuras. She passed away about six months before I was born. Perhaps if she had lived longer, I would have been closer to my grandparents on my father's side of the family.

As a child, it seemed like everyone in the entire world, regardless of nationality, came to the Polish National Home, or the "*Polish Club*", for their wedding reception. We still talk today of how long tables were set up in the hall for the wedding meal. After the meal, the men would break the tables down to make room for dancing. Stan Gardzina would prepare the dance floor with wax. We children would follow at his heels chirping, "Here, chick, chick, chick," as if he were feeding the chickens. Then we would flock to the balcony, with our Duncan yo-yo's in hand, to play and watch the adults dance to the Polka.

For those men who are a few years older than I, their childhood memories include trips to the Polish Club each Saturday with their fathers. Here they would take their weekly shower. At the time, the Polish Club was one of the few facilities in town that offered indoor plumbing.

Of course, while the boys took their showers, there was time for their fathers to socialize in the private club.

Memories like these are what lured each new generation back to the Polish Club. It was important to keep the spirit and traditions of the Polish people alive in the club where a part of our childhood was spent.

The memories of my grandparents, Anna (Lysik) and Stanley Mercik and Aniela (Matuszek) and Albert Kuras, and my father, Joseph A. Kuras, prompted me to become involved in this writing project. Hopefully their spirit will come alive in the following chapters about the Polish Community of South Grafton in the latter half of the 20th century.

The following chapters look at the Polish community in the more recent past and the present time. It offers what may be a glimpse of the future. With this in mind, I dedicate this portion of these works to my present and future - my loving wife Maryellen (Jarzowski) Kuras, my mother, Cecelia (Mercik) Kuras, and my children - Jonathan, Jillian and Justin Kuras.

Joseph Kuras

The 1960's

Stan Gardzina

In the 1960's, the Polish Club was the second home of many high school teenagers. Weekly dances were held at the club for the youth of Grafton for several years. They were made possible by one man, Stan Gardzina.

The club and Stan's teen dances made an everlasting impression on many teens of that time. This was most evident when Stan Gardzina passed away in October of 1997. In the funeral parlor, one particular floral arrangement was most noteworthy. It was from Grafton High School's Class of 1965.

Jude Henault was a member of that class. To this day, her heartfelt recollections of Stan and the Polish Club are so vivid and detailed:

To me, the Polish Hall was Stan. He was always there and we knew it. When, for some reason or other, St. James (Church) stopped holding weekly dances, Stan stepped in and started them up for us at the Polish Hall. What wonderful things these were, especially for Freshmen and Sophomores who could not yet drive and were not yet allowed to date. Parents would take turns car pooling us down to the hall and picking us up knowing that we were in safe hands because Stan would tolerate no misbehavior of any kind.

So for three hours per week, boys lined up on the left as you walked in, girls on the right. We'd "Mash Potato" and "Locomotion" ourselves into believing that we were American Bandstand North. David Gemme, our DJ, had a terrific collection of all the latest hits and did a good job of throwing in enough "Ladies Choices" so that those of us who rarely got asked to dance by a boy, could walk across the hall and for three minutes or so, dance with a boy and fantasize about it for the next week. Mostly though, the girls all danced together in groups (we still do at class reunions!) while the boys cowered across the hall watching us. There were a few brave souls amongst them; Mike Ragaini, Roger Lebel, Ernie Vallaincourt and Mickey McCain would venture over and ask us to dance.

From 1963-1965 the Polish Hall was the center of teen activity in all of Grafton. These dances were extremely popular and kids from all sections of town attended. They cost us 50¢ (which Stan used to pay the DJ) and there was no smoking or drinking allowed. If he caught anyone drinking or making-out in the parking lot, they were asked to leave. He was more lenient toward smoking as long as it was kept outside the hall.

There were a few abuses and never any major incidents. The rule was, if you came in with a group, you left with a group - no sneaking off with some older guy with a car. I don't know how he did it, but Stan always knew who you came with and he knew your parents, so there was little chance of getting away with much. Though being teenagers, we did try.

I remember once my sister Pat, wild woman that she was, sneaking out with a boy and my thinking, "Now, I'm really in trouble," since, being the oldest, it was my job to make sure she didn't screw up. If she did, I got punished too. Well, sure enough, in comes my Dad, which was a totally embarrassing experience in and of itself, since no one wanted their parents INSIDE the hall. They were supposed to wait outside, and Pat's nowhere in sight.

Like a precision SWAT team, some of her friends went out the side door and found her while I convinced my Dad that she was in the bathroom and would be out in a minute. Stan started talking with him, and we literally snuck her in behind my father's back so she could make her grand toilet exit and convince my father all was well. I don't think he really bought it, but I do know that she never tried it again when I was there.

In 1965 my graduating class was denied the right to have a graduation week dance at the High School. I don't remember why but I do remember going to Stan and explaining the situation to him. He agreed to let us have the hall free but we had to come up with our own DJ and guarantee good behavior - no drinking and especially no drinking and driving. I went to my classmates, explained the situation, and they agreed with the terms. We had a great time but more importantly, this really was the place the dance needed to be, though we didn't realize it at the time. Here is where we had spent so much of our adolescence, getting to know one another and building lasting friendships.

Here, too, we learned that respect is a two way street - perhaps life's most valuable lesson. Stan respected us and we knew it. We did our best to meet his expectations because we respected him. In no small way, our Polish Hall experiences launched us into adulthood and along the way brought the only real fun that some of us had during very trying years.

I can't say that I learned to dance there (I was really pretty much of a dancing klutz) and I certainly never learned to polka there (that would have been just too uncool) but I thoroughly enjoyed my class's 50th birthday party at the Polish Hall, at least in part, because of all the warm memories the Polish Hall surrounded us with that night as we rock-n-rolled our way back to the early sixties and each other.

Stan Gardzina did more than just sponsor teen dances. He was a part-time police officer and fireman in Grafton. He once started up a men's basketball team in Northbridge, a softball league for men in Grafton, and a girls' softball league in town as well. It was the girls' league that was his pride and joy, especially when they once traveled to western Massachusetts to win a state championship. Stan also served as a commissioner of Fisher Park at Ferry Street into the later years of his life.

Stan was also very influential in starting up the farm league division of the Grafton's Little League. His son Bernie was not drafted onto a team after the Little League held their tryouts. Stan did not think that a boy's organized youth baseball career should be over at age ten. So he formed his own league for boys who were not selected by Little League teams.

Stan and his coaches took the boys to Fenway Park for a Boston Red Sox game at the end of their first season. After word got around town, many boys preferred to play for Stan's league instead of the Little League. The Little League then decided to organize a farm league division for boys who were not drafted onto Little League teams.

John F. Kennedy and Stephen "Red" Huchowski

At one time, a portrait of John F. Kennedy hung in the hall of the Polish Club along with Thaddeus Kosciuszko, Casimir Pulaski, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Franklin D. Roosevelt. It was obvious why portraits of Polish leaders and war heroes were on display. The same held true for our two most popular presidents, Washington and Lincoln. And FDR's picture was there because he was in office when the Polish Club was built.

No one really knew why JFK's picture was on display, until Stephen "Red" Huchowski spoke up. Everyone knew one of Red's major interests in life was that of the outdoors. No one realized that Red "minored" in political history. Red was only a teenager when his father Joe Huchowski campaigned for John F. Kennedy. It seems that both Red and JFK had something in common - their fathers were business acquaintances alleged to be involved with importing goods of consumption sometime around the 1930's.

Kennedy and his younger brother Ted were traveling through the area on their way to Worcester to make a campaign speech. The elder Huchowski persuaded them to stop by the Polish Club where many votes could be guaranteed. Huchowski's campaign efforts were certainly appreciated by the Kennedy family, as evidenced by the visit Ted Kennedy later made to the Huchowski home.

"He came up, shook my Dad's hand, and thanked him for all of the campaigning my Dad did," said Red. "I was only a kid," Red added, "Who pays attention? You see some guy pull up in a Cadillac and you wonder 'who's he, the undertaker?'"

The purpose of Ted Kennedy's visit was to repay Joe Huchowski for his support. All

Huchowski asked for was a portrait of Kennedy to hang in the club.

The Renaissance

In the 1980's, a new chapter in the Polish Community of South Grafton began to unfold. The next generation of Polish Americans became involved in the Polish Club. In the 1990's, the building underwent many renovations, Polka dances became a regular event. The club was once again involved to a limited extent in sports. People from all sections of Grafton and neighboring towns were coming to South Grafton to utilize the club facilities. The Polish National Home Association had once again earned a positive name for itself in the community.

Shareholders Research Committee

In 1986, a new generation of shareholders was sought to continue the traditions of the Polish National Home. Many active members were advancing in years. They were no longer in a position to operate the club on a day to day basis. Social activities and private parties at the club were at a minimum. The club had become somewhat dormant and existed mostly on daily revenue from the private bar. The Polish Club was regarded as just another bar for shareholders and members to congregate.

A Shareholders Research Committee was formed at that time. It's charter was to identify current shares of stock that were no longer active. Many of those shares were owned by members who had since passed away. Family members of deceased shareholders were contacted. They were given the opportunity to transfer the stock to a relative who would be interested in becoming actively involved with the club.

By the late 1980's, third generation descendants of Klocek's, Huchowski's, Wenc's, Gardzina's, and Kuras' became shareholders of the Polish Club. These younger shareholders brought with them fresh ideas. They were responsible for the club's renaissance in the late 1980's and through the 1990's.

The successful efforts of the Shareholders Research Committee culminated with a Polka Mass at St. James Church in September of 1987. The traditional organ music and church hymns were set aside for this one Mass. Dick Pillar and his Polkabration orchestra provided the music and led the singing in both English and Polish. Some thought that the priest did not know what to make of this sort of a Catholic Mass. But he had little trouble accepting it after seeing how well the Mass was received by the congregation.

At the conclusion of the Mass, the band packed up their instruments and equipment, and headed down the road to the Polish Club. Both new and old shareholders gathered for an evening of Polish food, celebration and Polka dancing.

The End Of An Era - Chet Kuras

In 1992, a long standing tradition came to the end. For twenty eight years, the name Dominic "Chet" Kuras was synonymous with the Polish Club. For nearly three decades, Chet served the club as its President.

Chet often wore many different hats. Like many other organizations, there were never enough volunteers to take responsibility for the operation of the facility. Chet did it all, sometimes by choice, more often out of necessity. He took responsibility for directing the general affairs of the club, managing the club on a day to day basis, hiring bartenders, controlling liquor and beer inventories, filling in as a bartender, and making needed repairs to the building.

According to Walter Kuras, Chet's nephew and current club Treasurer, Chet Kuras was looked upon as a plant manager at the club.

"I think that's what his biggest concern was, that the club was kept up. At least from a plant management point of view," said Walter. "Chet was very concerned with his house and his yard. He was very meticulous. A place for everything down in his cellar. And you can see that at the club."

The old furnace in the boiler room was a prime example of how Chet organized and managed things. "That's what he took his greatest pride in. The internal workings of it, the cleanliness," Walter added. "That furnace was like what we would consider if we made a model car. The valves would be painted red, the pipes painted silver. Everything was meticulously painted."

Ronald F. Klocek is the grandson of the club's first President, Frank Klocek. In 1993, he was elected President of the Polish National Home Association. One of Klocek's earliest directives was to permanently recognize the contributions of all past Presidents. Through the efforts of Chet Kuras and his wife, Lucy, the minutes of all meetings, written in Polish, were examined. At the completion of this lengthy and tedious process, all past Presidents of the club had been identified. The club recognized all of these men with a plaque. It listed the names of all of the presidents, and is on display in the bar area of the club.

A similar replica plaque was presented to Chet Kuras at the regular monthly meeting of all shareholders on January 10, 1995. It was the club's way of saying thanks with appreciation for his 28 years of dedication and loyalty to the Polish National Home.

For 28 years, Chet was occupied with all of the day to day activities at the club. Nowadays, Chet frequents the club on occasion. In a conversation with his nephew Walter, he once indicated that he never realized there was a life after the Polish Club.

The Polish Tigers Revisited

Grafton Update with The Polish Tigers

In the 1990's, a television show on Grafton's local access channel 11 was broadcast each week. It was called "Grafton Update" with host Jim Gallagher. Jim, an avid baseball fan, was also a coach in the Grafton Little League.

Joe Kuras was the President of the Grafton Little League at that time, A baseball discussion between Gallagher and Kuras led to an idea for one of Gallagher's TV shows. With a little bit of coaxing, four of the original members of the Polish Tigers agreed to appear on Grafton Update. It was supposed to be a 30 minute show. It quickly became a 60 minute classic when one great baseball story was followed by another.

The show was videotaped and replayed for several months on Grafton's channel 11. It was also broadcast in the neighboring town of Northbridge on their local cable channel. A summary of the show was written by Kuras. A minor league baseball correspondent for the A Red Sox Journal, Kuras had the story published in the journal.

A Red Sox Journal is archived by the National Baseball Library in Cooperstown, New York. The members of the Polish Tigers team may not have been Hall of Fame players. But their exploits are permanently stored in the National Baseball Library at the Hall of Fame.

Portions of Kuras' article "*The Fisherville Polish Tigers - Baseball, Just For The Fun Of It*" from A Red Sox Journal follow.

It was a typically cold New England winter. As baseball fans waited out the winter months with anticipation, baseball's hot stove burned exceptionally bright one January night. Four remaining members of the 1929 Fisherville Polish Tigers got together to reminisce about the glory of their times. It was a golden age for baseball in Massachusetts' Blackstone Valley, as leftfielder Louie Nadolink, coach and infielder Henry Podsiadlo, catcher Hank Wenc, and centerfielder Ted Klocek recounted stories of their young adulthood and the game they loved.

The team was formed by Walter Such in the Farnumsville section of South Grafton, Massachusetts, sometime in 1927 or 1928. That meeting took place on Stanley Matuszek's front lawn. The ballplayers paid dues of fifty cents a week, to help raise money for bats, balls, and other equipment. They sponsored raffles and Saturday night dances to raise additional funds. And as a result of insurance policies taken out with the Polish National Alliance, they obtained uniforms at no cost.

The Polish Tigers were primarily an independent team, arranging their own schedule of home-and home games. They did participate in the Mac Ben League of Worcester, Massachusetts, capturing back-to-back championships in 1947 and 1948. The Dartmouth A. C., on Plantation Street, Worcester proved to be a big rival. Millbury, Rockdale, North Attleboro, Webster, Southbridge, Gardner, Uxbridge, and Chepachet, Rhode Island were just some of the Polish Tigers' opponents over the years.

Getting to some of these games proved to be just half the fun. "We'd put in a buck apiece (for gas) and take off," recalled coach Podsiadlo. While taking off wasn't much of a problem, stopping sometimes was, as Wenc recalled a trip to Southbridge, when Joe Huchowski lost his brakes along the way. Rounding up the boys for the trip home could also be a problem. Especially when the games coincided with Polish picnics, making the day's game an all day and all night affair. They'd get one guy into the car, when another would bail out. Often, the Polish Tigers would get back to Grafton around 10 P. M., with some of them due at work in the local mills at 11 P. M.

The Polish Tigers played their home games at Fisher Park, on Ferry Street in South Grafton. The park was much more than just a cow pasture, which describes at best other fields where the Tigers played some of their road games. On the road, the Tigers played in fields where the leftfielder actually positioned himself across the street. The umpires were typically a bunch of farmers in straw hats. All of which made for some interesting stories. Like the line drive over the shortstop's head, that the umpire called "Foul".

Fisher Park's wooden grandstand withstood many seasons of country ball, until Mother Nature and the hurricane of 1939 brought the structure to its knees. Today, a softball diamond and concession stand sit on the very same spot, as it is put to use by the Grafton Men's Softball League. The League is run by President Kenneth "Chip" Hudson, a nephew of Wenc. As one makes his way from the backstop to the concession stand, traces of the stone footings for the grandstands are still visible above the ground.

Passing the hat through the grandstands was a common practices in those days. Today it is often taken for granted at many a little league game, with no thought as to where the practice originated. Some of the money collected may have been guaranteed to the visiting team, as an

enticement to make the road trip. Other times, it was "winner take all". The annual little league parades that take place each year in many communities are another tradition which originated by teams like the Polish Tigers many years ago. Starting at the Polish Club, they would march to Fisher Park to kick off another baseball season.

The Polish Tigers did play some twilight games. But most of the time, they scheduled Sunday afternoon games. "If you ever walked through Farnumsville, all you'd find was a stray dog," said Klocek. "They were all at the ball game." It was a time, according to the Worcester Post newspaper, where "the most red blooded baseball in America, inch for inch, soul for soul, is in the Blackstone Valley."

"I was the first-to-third man," recalled Klocek. After reaching first base, he would watch for Coach Podsiadlo's tug on the ear. That was the signal that the coach was bunting on the second pitch. "And I'd be perched on 3rd," according to Klocek. Klocek was the only "outsider" of the group who originated from the Rockdale section of Northbridge, not Grafton. But he quickly established his ties to the community, when "I found a little girl I liked," in reference to his wife.

"I worked them hard," conceded coach Podsiadlo. "He had no trouble motivating the team," said Nadolink. "He was bigger than us, so we had no choice." Not only did they practice every night, but they would often walk to and from the ball field. Harry Stevens, a former pitcher and Dartmouth graduate, who later became principal of Grafton High School, is credited with providing the guidance and direction that prepared Podsiadlo to skipper the Polish Tigers.

Louie Nadolink was the man with a rifle for an arm. "If there were any scouts around at the time, they would have picked him up," said Podsiadlo of his leftfielder's chances of playing professional baseball. "I've seen a lot of guys throw," said Klocek in reference to today's Major Leaguers. "They haven't got half the arm Louie had."

One man who bore the brunt of Nadolink's cannon in left field was catcher Hank Wenc. Opponents, unwise to Nadolink's throwing capabilities, would often attempt to score on a base hit to left. Nadolink's perfectly pegged one-hoppers would give Wenc plenty of time to make the tag at the plate, before rolling two times, head over heels to the backstop.

"I caught one year without a chest protector," admitted Wenc. "We didn't have the money." But Wenc did have the imprint of the

baseball's stitches on his chest. This prompted him to swim all summer with his shirt on, to hide his bruises from his mother. It took a little bit of extra prodding to get Wenc to admit that he also wore no other protection between the mask and shin guards.

No team would be complete without its rivalries. And the Fisherville Polish Tigers had their share. "You're nothing but kids. You'll spoil our reputation," balked one opposing ballplayer when a team from Gardner, Mass. made the trip to Grafton. A \$50.00 guarantee was enough for Gardner to field its team, and the Polish Tigers "beat them quite bad," revealed Klocek. "And that's how they ended up scheduling a game up there."

When the Polish Tigers arrived in Gardner for the back end of the home-and-home series, they were subjected to some of the typical ribbing of the home town fans. "Hey fella, we're gonna beat you today," heckled one fan. Upon inquiry by Klocek, the fan explained why: "Because our boys eat kielbasa by the pound."

"We have no fear," replied Klocek. "We eat it by the yard." And the Polish Tigers promptly chalked up another "W" against the Gardner nine.

One of the Polish Tigers most fulfilling victories came at the expense of a team from Barre, Mass. "Remember the time we went to Barre, and they had a team that was all college boys?" Klocek reminded all. With Coach Podsiadlo at the altar that day, the Tigers were set to play with only 8 when a second stringer arrived just in time, with uniform in tow.

As was common in that day, friendly wagers took place on the sidelines. And while the Tigers did not have their wallets in their uniform pockets, they were able to borrow some money and get in on the action. Needless to say, the Tigers won that game, and collected their share of the winnings from an Italian gentleman of a gambling persuasion. He even took the Tigers to "Carruso's Bar" for a spaghetti feed that couldn't be beat.

But by far, all agreed that the biggest game was always for the town championship. Every year the Polish Tigers would play the Grafton town team. "Every year, we used to beat them," said Nadolink. "And they'd get mad."

The rivalry reached its peak one year when money was replaced by a wheelbarrow ride to the town common as the friendly wager. With the ride originating from the Polish Club, "We got as far as Fisher's Mill and we had to stop," said Wenc of his worthy opponent on the losing Grafton town team, "because he couldn't make it."

By then, former Major League ballplayers were finding their way to the Blackstone Valley, to either play for local mill teams, or simply barnstorm through the valley's hotbed for semi-pro baseball.

Former Red Sox first baseman Walt Dropo once played against the Tigers at Fisher Park. The righthanded slugger, at 6'5" and 220 lbs, went the opposite way off of hurler Chet Kuras. His round tripper to right field cleared Ferry Street, and struck a big elm tree half way up the hill of what is now the home of Albert "Cooney" Cardin.

Looking back 65 years later, these Polish Tigers draw a stark contrast to today's modern professional baseball players. "When we were playing," said Podsiadlo, if you told a guy to bunt a ball, he'd bunt it. In the big leagues today, 90% of the ballplayers don't know how to bunt."

"The only thing I'd like to be, is 17 years old today," revealed Nadolink, "and have a chance to play ball. Some one like (Red Sox' Mike) Greenwell, he wouldn't be able to carry my glove." Podsiadlo added, "The difference between these guys in the Major Leagues is that they (the Polish Tigers) would play for free. When we played all together, we had the best time of our lives."

The Polish Tiger "Farm Club"

Copies of the Polish Tigers videotape were sent to friends and relatives as far away as Florida and Indiana. In a subsequent letter to his nephew Chip Hudson, Bill Wenc recalled how the Polish Tiger roster was ready for a few changes in the late 1930's. The original players were 10 years older and had developed family responsibilities. Meanwhile, a "farm team" was in operation in the cow pastures at Akstin's Farm on Fitzpatrick Road.

"It's the farm at the highest point of the road before you go down hill to Grafton Street" (in Millbury; Millbury Street in Grafton), Wenc wrote.

According to Wenc, the team called themselves the "Farmers A. C." They wore maroon T-shirts with yellow letters. While they played the game for sheer enjoyment, they were also preparing themselves for that big step up to the Polish Tigers team.

In his letter to Hudson, Wenc went on to write:

Our gang was made up of Pete May, Franky, Stan, and Joey Linek, Arch Hebert, Joe and Stan Krula, myself, and two adopted boys that lived at the Akstin Farm - Charlie (?) and Johnny Dogwillow. Every Sunday after church we walked to the farm and flattest pasture to play. We used the nice, flat, dried "cow flaps" for bases. When you slid into them they broke up but you didn't hurt our ankles like you would on a flat rock.

We used to play against kids from Millbury and Rockdale (Northbridge) home and home. We would walk the railroad tracks to both towns. It was the shortest but the hottest way to get there. We enjoyed playing away because both towns had a real ball diamond. That was a treat for us, getting away from the rocky cow pastures.

We never had a full team most Sundays but we played and had good times anyway. I don't remember much about wins or losses but it was great.

About the time guys my age (18-19) were playing ball, the old Tigers were about done. Eventually Pete (May) and Franky (Linek) were recruited by the Tigers. Franky was a pitcher, southpaw. I played outfield a couple games at the very end.

Building Improvements

For the most part, the structure and decor of the Polish National Home remains the same today as it did in the 1930's. From time to time a new coat of paint was applied, and aluminum siding was installed on the exterior. In 1967, the bar area was renovated to its present style and design.

By the mid-1990's more renovations were necessary if the club was to stay in business. The times had changed. So did attitudes about alcohol and the operation of motor vehicles. Gone were the days where the club patrons consisted mainly of locals within walking distance. Daily income from the private bar was declining.

In 1993 and 1994, the first round of building improvements took place. A new roof was installed in 2 phases over the course of those years. New interior lighting was later added to the kitchen, bar, and pool rooms. And two new pool tables were purchased to replace the old pool table and ping pong table. Other bar improvements included a smoke eater, new stoves and refrigerators, and a 40" wide screen TV.

These enhancements were well received by the regular patrons who were either non-Polish Associate Members or shareholders of Polish ancestry. But the changes did little to generate additional business. The Board of Directors decided that the function hall on the

second floor would be remodeled. The extra revenue generated by hall rentals and a second cash bar would keep the club in business without having to raise drink prices.

Under the direction of club president Ronald Klocek, bids and estimates for renovations to the dance hall were sought. They included a new ceiling, refinished floors, repainted walls, new front steps, central air conditioning, new tables and chairs, window curtains and a new stage curtain. Other proposed building improvements included replacement windows, a new furnace, the removal of in-ground oil tanks, and the installation of new oil tanks inside the building. Electrical service upgrades were contracted with Massachusetts Electric.

From 1994 through 1996, all of the proposed work was completed on schedule and within budget. These renovations were also made possible by the careful planning and budgeting of the Board of Directors, the President and Treasurer. They included the following shareholders and the positions they held in the club at that time:

Ronald Klocek	President
Walter Kuras	Vice President and Treasurer
Rodney Wenc	Financial Secretary and Bar Manager
Joseph Kuras	Board of Directors and Recording Secretary
Maryellen Kuras	Recording Secretary
Michael Chludenski	Board of Directors and Vice President
Bernard Gardzina	Board of Directors
William Gribauskas	Board of Directors
Stephen "Red" Huchowski	Board of Directors
Kenneth "Chip" Hudson	Board of Directors
David Woskie	Board of Directors
Carol Ziembra	Board of Directors

Since the inception of the Polish National Home Association, many females of Polish ancestry owned shares of stock in the club. Carol Ziembra was the first female to be elected to the Board of Directors. In later years, Helen Brouseau was also elected to the Board. Maryellen Kuras became the first female Officer of the club, holding the position of Recording Secretary.

Polish Functions

Polka Masses and Parties

Over the years, Polka Masses and parties have been scheduled on a semi-annual basis by the Polish Club. This included the Polish National Home Association's 60th Anniversary in 1995. Again, a Polka Mass at St. James was scheduled, followed by a Polka Party with the Eddie Forman Orchestra providing the entertainment.

Some of the Polka Masses and parties were videotaped and shown on Grafton's local cable channel. They continue to be a success due to the dedication and hard work of Walter

and Patricia Wojnar. The Wojnar's have ensured that tickets remain at a price attractive to older and retired Polka fans at just eight dollars per person and fifteen dollars per couple. These events have always sold out, even on dates when they conflicted with bigger, more popular Polka events in other parts of New England.

Of course, no Polka event would be complete without the opportunity to imbibe in the spirited beverage of one's choice. A modestly priced cash bar was usually staffed by the Bar Manager of the club, be it Joe Kuras or his predecessor Rodney Wenc. If any small profit was to be realized from such festive Polka events, it was made here.

Before an evening of Polka dancing would get underway, many flocked to the kitchen on the first floor of the club. Here, Walter Kuras would have available plenty of kapusta, golombki and kielbasa. Meals would vary from a kielbasa sandwich to a Polish platter, consisting of a little bit of everything. Walt's kitchen staff consisted of the following shareholders and spouses at various times: Bill and Ann Gribauskas, Carol Ziemba, Helen Brousseau, Chip and Carolyn Hudson, Ronald and Beth Klocek, Bernie Gardzina and Maryellen Kuras. Like the price of the tickets, the meals were equally popular, ranging in price from just two to five dollars.

Later in the evening, when all were fed and the food was gone, the kitchen crew would clean up, close the kitchen and find a table up in the balcony of the hall. They would spend the last few hours of the evening enjoying the festivities with the rest of the crowd. The balcony proved to be a popular spot as many people specifically requested balcony seating for the Polka events.

Pat Opatka

Mr. and Mrs. Francis "Pat" Opatka were a fixture in the balcony for several Polka events at the club. With flashlight in hand, they walked to the club via the path from their yard which bordered the back boundary of the club. Like many others, the Opatka's enjoyed watching the dancing from up above at their balcony table.

The pathway that connected their property to the Polish National Home was affectionately referred to as "Pulaski Boulevard". In the winter months, the path was sometimes shoveled by hand so that Pat could take the short cut from his yard to the club.

Pat Opatka, a scorekeeper for the original Polish Tiger team, was the last link to the early days of the Polish Club. He took a regular turn every Friday afternoon behind the bar up until the time of his passing in February of 1996. Whenever a sticky or challenging situation arises at the club today, there is usually someone to recount how Pat Opatka handled similar situations in the past.

Zapusty

The increased popularity of the Polka Parties created its own dilemma where demand exceeded supply. Faithful followers of the Eddie Forman Orchestra traveled to the club from Taunton, New Bedford, Springfield and Boston for the Polka Mass and party. A limited amount of tickets were available to the general public due to Forman's devout following. It was not feasible to sell more tickets, since more tables and chairs meant less space on the dance floor.

In February of 1998, the club decided to sponsor a Zapusty. The Zapusty had been a regular event at the club in the 1940's through 1960's. Tickets were made available to the general public and once again this traditional pre-Lenten celebration was a sell-out. Polish food was served buffet style in the hall and "Ivory and Brass" provided the Polka entertainment. Before the first Zapusty had concluded, a second one was booked for 1999 with Ivory and Brass again.

The Revival of the Polish Club

Private Functions

To date, the Polish Club is one of the older, yet most active buildings in South Grafton. The renovations to the building, and dance hall specifically, resulted in a revival which extends far beyond the Polish community of South Grafton.

As the 1990's draws to a close, the club has once again been a popular location for bridal showers, weddings, and baby showers. Birthday parties from ages 1 to 70 have been booked at the club, along with numerous anniversary, holiday and family parties, and high school reunions. New Year's Eve parties, once a regular event in the 1960's, returned with great success in 1998.

Local sports and civic organizations have made the Polish Home their choice for various banquets. The Grafton Lion's Club has made use of the facilities on numerous occasions throughout the years.

Other organizations included the Grafton High School's girls varsity 1997 State Champion soccer team banquet, the annual Grafton Men's Softball League banquet, and the Grafton Little League 1998 District 5 Championship banquet. Brian Anderson, a member of that All Star team, is the grandson of Polish Tiger catcher Hank Wenc.

Teens and the Polish Club

While the music of today's youth differs drastically from that of the 1960's, the teens

and young adults have once again returned to the Polish Club.

In the 1920's, a young Albert Kuras played the piccolo for the Kosciuszko Marching Band of Northbridge and Fisherville. A picture of him and the band is on display downstairs in the club. On a winter night in 1998, his great grandson Jason Maloney, and his great, great grandson Michael Charron were upstairs, on stage, performing with their rock bands, Twist 160 and Dingbat, respectively.

When "Marley's", a non-alcoholic teen club in North Grafton closed its doors, Joanne and Brook Padgett brought their bands and sound equipment to the Polish Club for periodic bookings. The "Together We Can" committee, formed by both adults and teens in town, staged events at the club for the youth of Grafton. Grafton High School senior Nathan St. Jacques hosted events at the club with the proceeds going towards his classmates' class trip. Boy Scout Adam "Butta" Desrosiers utilized the facilities with a similar rock band event to earn his Eagle Scout award.

Like the teen dances of the 1960's, there were few abuses of the privileges and never any major incidents.

Sports and the Polish Club

Over the years, the memories of the Polish Tigers were just that - memories. The team's original scorebooks and unsold tickets to games were tucked away in a file cabinet at the club. Their trophies remained in a display case in the pool room.

Baseball, hockey and football games were usually shown on the TV in the bar. Televised car racing events brought a regular following into the bar. Many patrons enjoyed swapping hunting and fishing stories. But the club was not considered to be a "sports bar".

Softball and Billiards Teams

The Polish Club sponsored a softball team for many years in the 1980's and 1990's in the Grafton Men's Softball League. The league was formed in 1974 by Kenneth "Chip" Hudson, who presently serves the club as a member of the Board of Directors.

The winning team usually wrote a newspaper article for the weekly edition of the Grafton News. The Polish Club's won-loss record did not always bring back memories of the more successful original Polish Tigers. Yet, the softball team was often referred to as "modern day Polish Tigers". Some of the team and the league's biggest fans were of the same generation as the original Polish Tigers. They were always under the oak trees down the right field line each Sunday morning, enjoying the softball game and perhaps reminiscing of days gone by.

The Polish Club softball team won a league championship in 1992 and were runner-ups in 1991. With declining interest in the game, the league dropped two teams in the late 1990's. The Polish Club graciously bowed out of the Grafton Men's Softball League in 1998 and their players were dispersed to other teams in the league.

In 1998, Mark Cancelli, a part time bartender at the club, formed a billiards team. They entered the Camel Pool League and competed against other bars and clubs in the Worcester area. As a new team in the league, they had little idea what their competition would be like. Yet, they managed to finish 3rd in a 12 team league. Cancelli's team also included Jim Farrell, Ray Rondeau, Joe Ross, and Tom Gavin.

Bus Trips to Sporting Events

The Polish Club sponsored bus trips to Red Sox games at Fenway Park and were usually well attended in the past. The same could not be said for trips to Bruins hockey and Patriots football games. Usually these events never made it past the planning stages.

In 1998 the club made an attempt to revitalize the bus trip to a baseball game. Rather than attend a Red Sox game in Boston, a minor league baseball game in Pawtucket, Rhode Island was planned at a much more reasonable cost.

The trip was not well attended and the club lost a small amount of money. But it was especially pleasing to be in the company of appreciative and knowledgeable baseball fans of all ages. They enjoyed the opportunity to attend a professional baseball game without high prices and the anxiety of driving into Boston. It was noted that others who did not attend the trip would regret it.

The lack of interest in the bus trip was reflective of the prevailing attitudes of many people who frequented the private club. The majority of patrons were non-Polish Associate Members who only had the privilege of congregating on a daily basis in the private club. They had no authority to direct the affairs of the club.

Club functions, including dances upstairs in the hall and the bus trip, were organized to raise additional revenue, to keep drink prices down, to heighten interest and activity in the club and most importantly, to insure the future existence of the club. Yet, the events were not generally supported by the patrons. Events such as complimentary Christmas Eve and Super Bowl Sunday buffets in the bar were the exception. Some Associate Members felt that the bar, and not the hall, should be the hub of any club activities, since they were the ones who supported the club on a daily basis.

Club officers of Polish descent and their spouses were often responsible for all of the work involved with planning, organizing and preparing for such events, be it in the hall or the bar. Yet, they were not always well received in the bar because they were not regular patrons.

Over time, the Polish Club had become more of a second home for non-Polish Associate Members. Polish shareholders and club officers were sometimes looked upon as outsiders.

Computers and the Polish Club

It was once said that you could not find a single sheet of paper anywhere in the Polish Club. Instead, cigarette cartons were cut up and the back side was used to write on. In some respects, this has not changed today.

The computer plays a big role in the operation of the club. Minutes to monthly meetings are prepared and stored on a personal computer. Tickets for the club's social events, such as the Zapusty and Polka dances, are also designed and printed on the PC.

Database of Shareholders

During the 1990's, all of the shareholder certificate books were examined. The books were in very good order. It was very easy, albeit time consuming, to track each and every person who ever owned a share of stock in the Polish Club. The disposition of each share was accurately recorded in these books.

An interesting pattern appeared with the purchase and sale of stock. Several Polish people bought multiple shares of stock at the price of twenty five dollars per share. The moneys from the sale of stock were used to construct the building and build up a treasury. When the club became financially stable, several shares were sold back to the club for the same purchase price. Shareholders had provided the club with interest free loans.

All of this data, beginning with share #1 owned by Frank Klocek, is now in a computer database. Various reports can be generated, listing all shareholders since 1930, just current shareholders, stock transfers from one shareholder to another, or shareholders with no address on file. When communications are sent out to shareholders, this database is used to generate mailing labels.

The Eagle Heritage Journal

At a monthly shareholder's meeting, Walter Wojnar once spoke about Poland and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Poland had petitioned NATO for membership with little success. The U. S. Was lukewarm to the idea as they did not want to jeopardize their political relationship with Russia. It was suggested that a newsletter be sent to all shareholders, urging them to write their senators and legislators to support Poland's bid.

This resulted in the birth of the Eagle Heritage Journal, a quarterly newsletter mailed to all current shareholders. The first issue was devoted to Poland and their application to NATO. Subsequent editions kept shareholders up to date with events at the club. It provided information about Poland, Polish customs, and related news of interest. The computer was

used to create the newsletter in tabloid format.

A second reason for producing the newsletter was to generate more interest in the club. It was hoped that more shareholders would become actively involved after reading about all the good things happening at the club. Unfortunately, local interest did not peak. The newsletter was more favorably received by out-of-state shareholders. They appreciated the opportunity to read about what was going on at the old club back home.

Monthly Inventory

A laptop computer is now used to perform the monthly inventory of all merchandise. As the inventory is taken, the laptop is carried from the upstairs bar in the hall, to the downstairs bar, and to the walk-in cooler in the basement. The quantities of each bottle and keg are directly entered into the computer. Open containers of liquor and beer are weighed on conventional scales and their weights are entered into the computer. The computer calculates how many ounces remain in the open container based on the weight, and how many ounces of each liquor and beer were consumed each month. A far cry from the olden days where someone guessed the number of ounces in the bottle, and wrote down the number on the back of a cigarette carton!

The Internet

Today, anyone with a computer and an Internet connection can read all about the Polish National Home. Since 1996, the club has maintained its own web site on the Internet at <http://www.ultranet.com/~kuras/polclub.html>. The web site contains a brief history of the club, including all past Presidents and current Officers. Dates of monthly shareholder meetings are listed. And there are many links to other Polish and Grafton related web sites.

The club's web page address has been widely posted on the Internet. The club still receives e-mail messages from all over the world. Some of them are from other shareholders. Some from Polish people looking to research a recipe or their heritage. Sometimes the messages are written in English. And sometimes in Polish.

The Polish Club in the Community

The revival of the function hall at the Polish Club during the 1990's created an increased awareness within the community of the club's existence. The Polish Club had been one of the best kept secrets in town. The Grafton News and word of mouth advertising made more people aware of the facility and its availability. This helped to once again promote the club in a positive light.

The club also gained visibility in the community by its involvement with other organizations in town. The club had always supported various organizations when ever possible. In the 1990's, the focus shifted towards local organizations in town. This included the

Grafton Police and Fire departments and the Grafton Lions Club. The club also supported the efforts of the Grafton Little League and Senior Babe Ruth team, the Grafton Lake Sox.

The Bon Voyage Party, an organized event for graduating seniors of Grafton High School, is supported by the Polish Club. Graduating seniors of Polish ancestry are also eligible for a scholarship from the club. Hopefully some of these Polish graduates will remember their heritage and return to the club to uphold the traditions and beliefs of their ancestors.

The Next Millennium

A stable yet limited income is realized by the faithful patrons who frequent the club on a regular basis. But it has been the renewed interest in the hall facilities that has played a major role in the club. Without the new generation of shareholders and building renovations of the 1990's, the Polish National Home may not be in existence today.

As the 21st Century approaches, the club is positioned once again for change. The only question is who will step forward to take charge. Monthly shareholder meetings today are still attended by only 10 or 12 faithful members. This is no different than 20 or 40 years ago when a small core of dedicated shareholders directed the affairs of the club.

With each new generation, there is less likelihood of devotion to one's nationality and roots. Heritage has become more of an afterthought, as each generation represents more of a true melting pot of Americans. It becomes increasingly difficult to uphold the traditions of one's heritage when more and more people are made up of several nationalities.

Perhaps someday, in order to keep the Polish National Home in operation, it will become necessary to rewrite the club's charter. The day may come where non-Polish members of the community will own a share of stock in the club and direct the affairs of the club.

Until then it is hoped that the Polish traditions will continue to pass from generation to generation. Perhaps projects such as this writing and scholarships to graduating seniors of Polish ancestry will spark a new interest in younger generations. Perhaps curiosity will get the best of several young Polish Americans who will someday come to the Polish National Home to find out what it truly means to be Polish and proud.

Joseph Kuras
December 26, 1998

Appendix A - Shareholders of the Polish National Home Association

CERT #	# of SHARES	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	PURCHASE DATE	TRANSFER TO / DISPOSITION
1	1	Klocek	Frank	1/30/31	Edmund Prybyla
2	1	Matuszek	John	10/31/30	Stanley Matuszek
3	2	Such	Walter	1/31/31	Lee W. Pelletier
4	1	Dubiel	Peter	10/30/30	
5	1	Ratkiewicz	Kazimierz	8/28/31	Helen Ratkiewicz
6	1	Obara	Thomas	1/30/31	Stasia O'bara
7	1	Greczel	Anthony	1/29/32	Edward Grynsel
8	1	Knapik	John	10/31/30	Walter Knapik
9	1	Bien	Karolina	2/26/32	Fred Kuras
10	1	Swierz	Joseph	12/28/30	Mitchell Swierz
11	2	Chorych	P. R. K.	10/31/30	Kasa Pomocy
12	2	Polish Am	Citizen Club	10/31/30	defunct; repossessed
13	4	Grupa ZNP	No. 1578	12/1/30	defunct; repossessed
14	1	Ratkiewicz	Waclaw	12/1/30	Paul Pieklik
15	1	Pietruszka	Adam	12/1/30	Edward J Pietruszka
16	1	Kallis	John	12/28/30	Mary Kaliss
17	1	Matuszek	Stanley	1/30/31	Walter Wasiuk
18	1	Such	Joseph	2/27/31	Robert E. Such
19	1	Kupiec	John	2/27/31	Steven John Rybicki
20	2	Such	Walter	2/27/31	Lee W. Pelletier
21	1	Szajna	Antoni	2/27/31	Janina Szajna
22	1	Szajna	Antoni	2/27/31	Janina Szajna
23	1	Kallis	Frank	4/24/31	Stephen Huchowski Jr
24	1	Knapik	John	4/24/31	Ann R. Houde
25	1	Tomkiewicz	John	5/29/31	Mitchell Tomkiewicz
26	1	Kuras	Jan	6/26/31	Janice Kuras Zawada
27	1	Nadolink	John	6/26/31	Walter Nadolink
28	1	Matuszek	Mary	7/31/31	Stacia Matuszek
29	1	Matuszek	Albina	7/31/31	Edwin Matuszek
30	1	Wenc	Frank	7/31/31	Josephine Rutana
31	1	Knapik	Frank	7/31/31	Eugene Knapik
32	1	Morris	George	12/29/31	Charles Morriss
33	1	Majkut	Jan	7/31/31	Mark Chludenski
34	1	Wenc	Konstanty	8/28/31	Chester Wenc
35	1	Koziol	Joseph	8/28/31	Stanley J Koziol Jr
36	1	Fudali	Anthony	8/28/31	Walter J. Fudali
37	1	Bien	Thomas	11/27/31	Stanley Bien
38	1	Such	Olympia	12/29/31	Michaelena Such
39	1	Pietruszka	Adam	12/29/31	Edward J Pietruska
40	1	Zastowana	Anthonina	3/25/32	Walter Zastawny
41	1	Knapik	Maryanna	4/29/32	Fredrick Knapik
42	1	Linek	Jan	11/25/32	Thomas J. Gwozdowski
43	1	Kuras	Wojciech	11/25/32	Joseph E. Kuras
44	1	Krula	Joseph	11/25/32	Veronica Krula
45	1	Klocek	Anna	11/25/32	Chester J. Lysik
46	1	Baran	Helena	11/25/32	Walter Baran
47	1	Klocek	Anna	11/25/32	Dwayne Brousseau
48	1	Rybicki	Julian	1/27/33	William J. Rybicki

CERT #	# of SHARES	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	PURCHASE DATE	TRANSFER TO / DISPOSITION
49	1	Szajna	Stanislaw	2/25/33	Antoni Szajna
50	1	Szajna	Stanislaw	2/25/33	Antoni Szajna
51	1	Wojnar	Joseph	2/25/33	Walter Wojnar
52	1	Klocek	Frank	4/28/33	Mark Brousseau
53	1	Matuszek	John	4/28/33	Stanley Matuszek
54	1	Such	Walter J.	4/28/33	Lee W. Pelletier
55	1	Dubiel	Peter	4/28/33	
56	1	Ratkiewicz	Kazmiriez	4/28/33	Albert Ratkiewicz
57	1	Obara	Thomas	4/28/33	Theodore J. O'bara
58	1	Grezel	Anthony	4/28/33	Edward Grynzel
59	1	Knapik	John	4/28/33	Wladyslaw Oleksik
60	1	Bien	Karolina	4/28/33	Carol Ziemba
61	1	Swiersz	Joseph	4/28/33	Mitchell Swiersz
62	2	Chorych	P. R. K.	4/28/33	Kasa Pomocy
63	2	Polish Am	Citizens Club	4/28/33	repossessed; defunct
64	4	Grupa ZNP	#1578	4/28/33	repossessed; defunct
65	1	Ratkiewicz	Waclaw	4/28/33	Wicenty Matuszek
66	1	Pietruszka	Adam	4/28/33	Edward J. Pietruszka
67	1	Kaliss	John	4/28/33	Mary Kaliss
68	1	Matuszek	Stanley	4/28/33	Joseph Wasiuk
69	1	Such	Joseph	4/28/33	Edward Such
70	1	Kupiec	John	4/28/33	Juliana B Rybicki
71	1	Such	Walter J.	4/28/33	Lee W. Pelletier
72	1	Szajna	Antoni	4/28/33	Janina Szajna
73	1	Szajna	Antoni	4/28/33	Janina Szajna
74	1	Kaliss	Frank	4/28/33	John Rodominick
75	1	Knapik	John	4/28/33	Zigmont Knapik
76	1	Tomkiewicz	John	4/28/33	Evelyn Slanda
77	1	Kuras	Jan	4/28/33	Wayne Kuczinski
78	1	Nadolink	John	4/28/33	Louis Nadolink
79	1	Matuszek	Mary	4/28/33	Stacia Matuszek
80	1	Matuszek	Albina	4/28/33	Stephen Matuszek
81	1	Wenc	Frank	4/28/33	Bolestaro Wence
82	1	Knapik	Frank	4/28/33	Adam Statkauskas
83	1	Morris	Geroge	4/28/33	Francis Opatka
84	1	Majkut	Jan	4/28/33	Steve Rodominick
85	1	Wenc	Konstanty	4/28/33	Stanley Wenc
86	1	Koziol	Joseph	4/28/33	Stanley Koziol Jr.
87	1	Fudali	Anthony	4/28/33	Mary Fudali
88	1	Bien	Thomas	4/28/33	Thomas Bien
89	1	Such	Olympia	4/28/33	Edward Elkinson
90	1	Pietruszka	Adam	4/28/33	Edward J Pietruszka
91	1	Zastowna	Anthonina	4/28/33	Linda Zastowna
92	1	Knapik	Maryanna	4/28/33	Joan M. McGauley
93	1	Linek	Jan	4/28/33	Thomas J. Gwozdowski
94	1	Kuras	Wojciech	4/28/33	Frank J. Kuras
95	1	Krula	Joseph	4/28/33	Stanley Walter Krula
96	1	Baron	Helena	4/28/33	Walter Baran

CERT #	# of SHARES	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	PURCHASE DATE	TRANSFER TO / DISPOSITION
97	1	Klocek	Anna	4/28/33	sold back to club
98	1	Rybicki	Julian	4/28/33	Julian Rybicki Jr.
99	1	Szajna	Stanislau	4/28/33	Antoni Szajna
100	1	Szajna	Stanislau	4/28/33	Antoni Szajna
101	1	Wojnar	Joseph	4/28/33	Jennie Wojnar
102	1	Such	Walter J.	4/28/33	Lee W. Pelletier
103	1	Such	Walter J.	4/28/33	Lee W. Pelletier
104	1	Wojnar	Wojcieck	6/30/33	William M Gribauskas
105	1	Knapik	Josefa	6/30/33	Anna Houde
106	1	Koziol	Frank	6/30/33	
107	1	Misiaszek	Walter	9/29/33	Theodore Misiaszek
108	1	Podsiadlo	Joseph	12/29/33	Frank Podsiadlo
109	1	Radzik	Alexander	1/26/34	Stephen M. Radzik
110	2	Polish Tiger	Baseball Club	1/26/34	Young Polish Tigers
111	1	Branow ick	Michael	4/27/34	John S. Czebotar
112	1	Halko	John	4/27/34	
113	1	Shandrick	Sarfin	6/4/34	Gregory J Shandrick
114	1	Morris	Anna	7/28/34	Adam Ramian
115	1	Knapik	Stanley	10/27/34	Richard S. Knapik
116	1	Baran	Mr & Mrs Walter H.	11/30/34	
117	1	Ciborowski	J S	11/30/34	Joseph Garabedian
118	1	Knapik	John	11/30/34	Mary Bochnisk
119	1	Knapik	Joseph	12/28/34	Felix Knapik
120	1	Kuras	Aniela	12/28/34	Joseph Huchowski
121	1	Branowicki	Mary	12/28/34	Harold Branowicki
122	1	Podsiadlo	Helen	12/28/34	Helen Klocek
123	1	Bien	Apolonia	12/28/34	Frank Bien
124	1	Czerwonka	Wincenty	12/28/34	sold back to club
125	1	Lukaszewicz	Peter	1/5/35	Elzbrita Lukaszewicz
126	1	Nadolink	John	1/25/35	Michael Nadolink
127	1	Zastawny	Stanley	1/25/35	William Zastawny
128	1	Bien	Walter	1/25/35	Carol Ziemba
129	1	Rybicki	Barbara	1/25/35	Gary Rybicki
130	1	Ratkiewicz	Elizabeth	2/22/35	Bertha McMahan
131	1	Obara	Joseph	1/25/35	Ann Leblanc
132	1	Obara	Zofia	1/25/35	John L. Rawinski
133	1	Kilin	Frank	1/29/35	Alexander Lipinski
134	1	Kuras	Wojciech	1/29/35	George J. Kuras
135	1	Koziol	Katherine	1/29/35	Stanley Koziol
136	1	Knapik	Stanislawa	1/29/35	Stacia Proctor
137	1	Pietruczkiewicz	Alexander	1/25/35	Stla Pietruczkiewicz
138	1	Klocek	Frank	3/30/35	sold back to club
139	1	Filor	Joseph	4/26/35	Raymond Filor
140	1	Miscaszek	Marya	4/26/35	Theodore J Misiaszek
141	1	Michalski	Cecelia	4/26/35	
142	1	Kosciozko	Edward	5/31/35	Francis Wenc
143	1	Pastor	Joseph	5/31/35	Joseph Pastor Jr.

CERT #	# of SHARES	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	PURCHASE DATE	TRANSFER TO / DISPOSITION
144	1	Knapik	Frank Jr	6/28/35	Francis D Knapik
145	1	Knapik	Jennie	6/28/35	
146	1	Kuchowska	Kataryzna	7/26/35	Edward Radoniewicz
147	1	Pryan	Anna Stasia (Knapik)	7/26/35	
148	1	Obara	Francis	7/26/35	Michael Obara
149	1	Such	Henry	7/26/35	Janet E. Such
150	1	Szarek	Michael	7/26/35	James Szarek
151	1	Wojnar	Wojcieck	7/26/35	William Gribauskas
152	1	Hospod	Joseph	8/23/35	Joseph Kostka
153	1	Halko	John	8/23/35	
154	1	Pastor	Jan	9/27/35	Theodore Knapik
155	1	Podsiadlo	Henry	9/27/35	
156	1	Opatka	John	10/25/35	sold back to club
157	1	Ramian	Theodore	10/25/35	Bolestaw Korona
158	1	Zastawny	Thelma	10/25/35	William Zastawny
159	1	Filor	John	10/25/35	Walter Lussier
160	1	Klin	Mary	11/29/35	
161	1	Linek	Frank	11/29/35	Walter K. Kuras
162	1	Such	Walter J.	11/29/35	Lee W. Pelletier
163	1	Wojnar	Jennie	11/29/35	Eugene Wojnar
164	1	Wasiuk	Joseph	11/29/35	John Wasiuk
165	1	Hospod	Chester	11/29/35	
166	1	Matuszek	Stanley	11/29/35	Janine Trainor
167	1	Dubiel	Maryja	12/28/35	Victoria D Arnold
168	1	Fudali	Joseph	12/28/35	
169	1	Klocek	Theodore	12/28/35	Thaddeus Klocek
170	1	Klocek	Frank	12/28/35	sold back to club
171	1	Klocek	Leon	12/28/35	Esther Klocek
172	1	Kuras	Josephine	12/28/35	Maryellen Kuras
173	1	Morin	Henry	12/28/35	Stanley Kuras
174	1	Matuszek	John	12/28/35	Conrad Matuszek
175	1	Obara	Wincenty	12/28/35	Stella O'bara
176	1	Stanick	Stella	12/28/35	Bertha Rkwztz McMahan
177	1	Stopyra	Stanley	12/28/35	Allan W. Rybicki
178	1	Zastwona	Antonina	12/28/35	Joseph Zastawny
179	1	Kosciozko	Edward	12/28/35	sold back to club
180	1	Ciborowski	J. S.	12/28/35	Joseph Boutiette
181	2	Ciborowski	J. S.	12/28/35	sold back to club
182	1	Wenc	Wincenty	12/28/35	
183	1	Hospod	John	12/28/35	William Hospod
184	1	Czebotor	John	12/28/35	John S. Czebotor
185	1	Obara	John	12/28/35	Gary R. Houde
186	1	Ciborowski	J. S.	12/28/35	Henry J. Ciborowski
187	1	Matuszek	Stacia	12/28/35	Stasia Wasiuk
188	1	Matuszek	Stacia	4/28/35	Phyllis Henault
189	1	Pawelzyk	Alexander	12/28/35	John J. Houde
190	1	Wasiuk	John (Frances)	10/26/36	Walter Wasiuk

CERT #	# of SHARES	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	PURCHASE DATE	TRANSFER TO / DISPOSITION
191	1	Klocek	Thaddeus	12/28/35	
192	1	Klocek	Helen	12/28/35	
193	2	Pomocy	Kosa	/ /	repossessed; defunct
194	2	Pomocy	Kosa	/ /	repossessed; defunct
195	1	Swierz	Mitchell	9/28/37	
196	1	Swierz	Mitchell	9/28/37	Edward J Karolkewicz
197	1	Karolkewicz	Edward J.	/ /	Jennie P Karolkewicz
198	1	Pieklik	Paul	4/28/39	Sally B Kernan
199	1	Matuszek	Wincenty	4/28/39	
200	0	VOID	VOID	/ /	John F. Krula
201	1	Ramian	Adam	12/28/40	John W. Krula
202	1	Morris	Charles	12/28/40	
203	1	Kuras	Stanley	3/28/41	
204	1	Knapik	Zigmont	3/28/41	
205	1	Knapik	Theodore	3/25/41	
206	1	Radoniewicz	Edward	11/28/41	Michael Branowicki
207	1	Oleksik	Wladyslaw	11/28/41	
208	1	Bochniak	Marja	11/28/41	
209	1	Korona	Boleslaw	12/26/41	sold back to club
210	1	Wenc	Boleslaw	3/27/42	William P. Wenc
211	1	Arnold	Victoria D.	8/28/42	
212	1	Szajna	Antoni	2/27/43	Janina Szajna
213	1	Szajna	Antoni	2/27/43	Janina Szajna
214	1	Szajna	Antoni	2/27/43	Janina Szajna
215	1	Szajna	Antoni	2/27/43	Janina Szajna
216	1	Henault	Phyllis	5/28/43	Gerald Henault
217	1	Wasiuk	Stasia	5/28/43	
218	1	Kuras	Frank	3/24/44	Paul J. Kuras
219	1	Obara	Theodore J.	2/9/46	Robert J. O'bara
220	1	Kaliss	Mary	2/9/46	
221	1	Zastawny	Walter	2/9/46	
222	1	Rawinski	Stasia Obara	2/9/46	Maryanne Boberg
223	1	Kaliss	Mary	2/9/46	
224	1	Podsiadlo	Frank	12/20/46	
225	1	Koziol	Stanley	12/27/46	
226	1	Wenc	Stanley	1/25/47	Mitchell Wenc
227	1	Wenc	Chester	1/25/47	Rodney Wenc
228	1	Fudali	Walter J.	1/25/47	sold back to club
229	1	Ratkiewicz	Albert	1/25/47	Returned to club
230	1	Fudali	Mary	3/29/47	
231	2	Polish Tiger	Younger Club	4/27/47	repossessed; defunct
232	1	Nadolink	Walter	4/27/47	
233	1	Bien	Stanley	4/27/47	
234	1	Knapik	Felix	6/4/47	
235	1	Knapik	Fredrick	6/24/47	Ronald F. Klocek
236	1	Hospod	William	7/25/47	William Hospod
237	1	Matuszek	Stanley	5/1/48	
238	1	Such	Edward	5/1/48	

CERT #	# of SHARES	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	PURCHASE DATE	TRANSFER TO / DISPOSITION
239	1	Hospod	William	11/22/48	sold back to club
240	1	Knapik	Eugene	5/28/49	
241	1	Statkauskas	Adam	4/28/49	
242	1	Lukaszewicz	Elizabrita	9/25/49	Leocadia Laurie
243	1	Szajna	Janina	10/29/49	
244	1	Szajna	Janina	10/29/49	Stanley Szajna
245	1	Szajna	Janina	10/29/49	
246	1	Szajna	Janina	10/29/49	
247	1	Szajna	Janina	10/29/49	
248	1	Szajna	Janina	10/29/49	
249	1	Szajna	Janina	10/29/49	
250	1	Szajna	Janina	10/29/49	
251	1	Kuras	George J.	3/25/50	
252	1	Nadolink	Michael	5/26/51	
253	1	Knapik	Walter	9/1/51	sold back to club
254	1	Huchowski	Joseph	7/30/54	Stephen Huchowski
255	1	McMahon	Bertha Ratkiewicz	7/30/54	
256	1	Beauregard	Helen	1/3/55	
257	1	Ciborowski	Henry	4/4/55	
258	1	Karolkiewicz	Jennie P (Swierz)	4/4/55	
259	1	Branowicki	Michael	1/7/56	Mary Branowick
260	1	Rybicki	Julian Jr	4/28/56	
261	1	Rybicki	William J.	5/26/56	
262	1	Wojnar	Walter	7/19/58	
263	1	Kuras	Dominic F.	7/19/58	
264	1	Kuras	Dominic F.	7/19/58	CherylKuras Anderson
265	1	Rutana	Josephine	11/29/1858	Michael Rutana
266	1	Rutana	Josephine	/ /	VOID
267	1	Elkinson	Edward	2/2/59	
268	1	Such	Michaelena	2/2/59	
269	1	Houde	Anna	2/2/59	James Houde
270	1	Koziol	Stanley J. Jr	8/27/60	
271	1	Kuras	Fred	12/5/61	Mark Kuras
272	4	Pietruszka	Edward J.	12/5/61	
273	1	Wojnar	Eugene	7/22/63	
274	1	Klocek	Esther	9/30/63	Carol Plante
275	1	Nadolink	Louis	12/16/63	
276	1	Rutana	Michael(Mark)	12/16/63	
277	1	Laurie	Leocadia	4/4/64	
278	1	Pietruczkiew	Stella	5/29/64	John&FeleciaMatuszek
279	1	Misiaszek	Theodore J	4/30/65	
280	1	Gardzina	Stanley	5/29/65	
281	1	Matuszek	John & Felecia	1/28/66	John Matuszek
282	1	Matuszek	John	1/29/66	John Matuszek Jr.
283	1	Such	Robert E.	10/1/66	
284	1	Baron	Walter	10/1/66	William Szarek
285	1	Baran	Walter	10/1/66	

CERT #	# of SHARES	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	PURCHASE DATE	TRANSFER TO / DISPOSITION
286	1	Radzik	Stephen M.	2/25/67	
287	1	Matuszek	Conrad	2/24/67	
288	1	Lipinski	Alexander	11/8/68	
289	1	Branowicki	Mary H.	3/1/69	
290	1	Filor	Raymond	7/26/69	
291	1	Knapik	Stacia	8/30/69	VOID
292	1	Proctor	Stacia	8/30/69	Joyce Raskett
293	1	Wojnar	Jennie K.	10/31/69	VOID
294	1	Wojnar	Jennie K.	10/31/69	
295	1	Houde	Ann R.	2/28/70	
296	1	Houde	Gary R.	2/28/70	
297	1	Bien	Frank	1/2/71	
298	1	Rybicki	Gary W.	1/29/72	
299	1	Zastawny	Linda	1/29/72	
300	1	Zastawny	Joseph	1/29/72	
301	1	Bien	Thomas	10/1/74	
302	1	Branowicki	Harold	12/31/74	
303	1	Shandrick	Gregory J.	4/28/75	Eugene Wojnar
304	1	Obara	Stella A.	7/28/75	VOID/David O'bara
305	1	Rybicki	Allan W.	10/4/77	
306	1	Szajna	Stanley	10/29/78	
307	1	Lussier	Walter	4/28/80	VOID
308	1	Lussier	Walter	4/28/80	
309	1	Prybyla	Edmund J.	6/30/80	
310	1	Gribauskas	William	8/30/80	
311	1	Gribauskas	William	8/30/80	
312	1	Kuras	Mark	12/28/80	
313	1	Wenc	Mitchell	10/31/81	
314	2	Zeimba	Carol L.	3/27/82	Carol&Rachel Ziemba
315	1	Rybicki	Steven J.	5/31/82	
316	1	Rybicki	Juliana B.	5/31/82	
317	1	Klocek	Ronald F.	10/7/82	
318	1	Krula	A. Veronica	12/31/83	
319	1	Krula	Stanley W.	12/31/83	
320	1	Kuras	Walter K.	6/1/84	
321	1	Opatka	Francis	3/30/85	
322	9	Pelletier	Lee W.	3/30/85	
323	1	Obara	David	4/15/87	
324	1	Kuras	Joseph E.	4/15/87	
325	2	Zastawny	William E.	4/15/87	William E. Zastawny
326	1	Szarek	James	4/15/87	
327	1	Czebotar	John S.	4/15/87	
328	1	Branowicki	Stanley M.	4/15/87	
329	1	Rawinski	John L. (Stasia)	4/15/87	Helen Blazis
330	1	Ziemba	Carol L.	4/15/87	
331	1	Ziemba	Rachel	4/15/87	
332	1	Ratkiewicz	Helen	4/15/87	
333	2	Gwozdowski	Thomas J.	5/25/87	

CERT #	# of SHARES	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	PURCHASE DATE	TRANSFER TO / DISPOSITION
334	1	Houde	John J.	5/25/87	
335	1	Matuszek	Stanley	5/25/87	
336	1	Matuszek	Conrad	5/25/87	
337	1	Matuszek	Edwin	5/25/87	
338	1	Matuszek	Stephen	5/25/87	
339	1	Knapik	Richard S.	5/25/87	
340	1	McGauley	Joan M.	5/25/87	
341	1	Wojnar	Eugene	5/25/87	Mark Wojnar
342	1	Kearnan	Sally B.	5/25/87	
343	1	Pastor	Joseph Jr.	5/25/87	
344	1	Koziol	Stanley J. Jr	5/25/87	
345	1	Wojnar	Peter B.	5/25/87	
346	1	Wojnar	Walter J.	5/25/87	Steven J. Wojnar
347	1	Tomkiewicz	Mitchell	7/8/87	
348	1	Slanda	Evelyn	7/8/87	
349	1	Wasiuk, Jr.	Walter	7/8/87	
350	1	Wasiuk	Joseph	7/8/87	
351	1	Trainor	Janine	7/8/87	
352	1	Obara	Robert J.	7/8/87	
353	2	Grynsel	Edward	7/8/87	
354	1	Wojnar	Mark	7/8/87	
355	1	Such	Janet E.	8/11/87	
356	1	Such	William & Janet	10/13/88	
357	2	Zastawny	William E.	6/10/89	
358	1	Wojnar	Steven J.	10/10/89	
359	1	Kuras	Walter J.	8/10/90	
360	1	Dumas	Jennie N.	8/10/90	
361	1	Mercik	Charles J.	8/10/90	
362	1	Tessier	Kenneth F.	8/10/90	
363	1	Hudson	Kenneth W.	8/10/90	
364	1	Wenc	Mitchell W.	8/10/90	
365	1	Brousseau	Helen	8/10/90	
366	1	Gardzina	Roger S.	8/10/90	
367	1	Gardzina	Bernard	8/10/90	
368	1	Lussier	Josephine	8/10/90	
369	1	Rose	Johanna	8/10/90	
370	1	Woskie	David F.	10/12/90	
371	1	Plante	Carol	10/12/90	
372	1	Henault	Gerald A.	5/11/91	
373	1	Huchowski	Stephen "Red"	5/25/92	
374	1	Knapik	Francis D.	5/25/92	
375	1	Wenc	Rodney P.	10/6/92	
376	1	Elkinson	Chester K.	2/2/93	VOID
377	1	Desruisseaux	Paul R.	2/2/93	
378	1	Elkinson	Stella	2/13/93	
379	1	Chludenski	Michael P.	5/10/93	
380	1	Raskett	Joyce	8/27/93	
381	1	Wenc	William P.	3/11/94	

CERT #	# of SHARES	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	PURCHASE DATE	TRANSFER TO / DISPOSITION
382	1	Kuras	Paul J.	3/25/95	
383	1	Kuras	Maryellen	5/13/95	
384	1	Zawada	Janice	5/13/95	
385	1	Huchowski, Jr.	Stephen	5/13/95	
386	1	Chludenski	Mark	5/14/95	
387	1	Lysik	Chester J.	5/22/95	
388	1	Houde	James	6/5/95	
389	1	Rodominick	John S.	7/10/95	
390	1	Rodominick	Steven	7/10/95	
391	1	Boutiette	Joseph	7/10/95	
392	1	Misiaszek	Theodore J.	7/22/95	
393	1	Brousseau	Dwayne	8/7/95	
394	1	Brousseau	Mark	8/7/95	
395	1	Garabedian	Joseph	8/7/95	
396	1	Matuszek Jr	John	8/7/95	
397	0	VOID		/ /	VOID
398	1	Kuczinski	Wayne	8/7/95	
399	1	Gosselin	Stephen	9/15/95	
400	1	LeBlanc	Ann	12/28/95	
401	1	Wenc	Francis	12/28/95	
402	1	Anderson	Cheryl (Kuras)	12/28/95	
403	1	Boberg	Maryanne	1/1/96	
404	1	Blazis	Helen	1/1/96	
405	1	Krula	John F.	5/24/96	
406	1	Krula	John W.	5/24/96	
407	1	Szarek	William "Buzz"	1/1/97	
408	1	Kostka	Joseph	10/11/97	
409	1	Wasiuk	Walter	10/5/98	
410	1	Obara	Michael	3/22/99	
411	1	Bien	Wanda	10/11/99	
412	1	Henault	Ronald J.	12/19/99	
413	1	Henault	John C.	12/19/99	
414	1	Sheehan	Donna M.	12/19/99	
415	1	Henault	Michelle M.	12/19/99	
416	1	Maranda	Cathy S.	12/19/99	
417	1	Flynn	Eileen	12/19/99	
418	1	Tomkiewicz	Carolyn	12/19/99	
419	1	Wright	Susan	12/19/99	
420	1	Tomkiewicz	Donna	12/19/99	
421	1	Tomkiewicz	Thomas	12/19/99	
422	1	Flynn	Katherine	12/19/99	
423	1	Flynn	Joseph	12/19/99	
424	1	Flynn	Megan	12/19/99	
425	1	Smith	Richard	10/2/00	
426	1	Huchowski	Dr. Stephen Woodballs	9/25/01	
427	1	Lipinski	Thomas	9/25/01	
428	1	Charron	Dolores	9/25/01	
429	1	Rybicki	Basha	5/1/02	
430	1	Rybicki	Janice	5/1/02	

431	1	Andersen	Matt	2/16/03
432	1	Andersen	Brian	2/16/03
433	2	Pietruszka	Thomas	4/19/03
434	2	Pietruszka	Steven	4/19/03
435	1	Huchowski	Robert	4/19/03
436	1	Bien	Francis	12/10/03
437	1	Bien	Christopher	12/10/03
438	1	Bien	Richard	12/10/03

Appendix B - Presidents of the Polish National Home Association

1930 - 1999

Frank Klocek

1930 - 1935, 1938 - 1939

John Matuszek

1936 - 1937, 1942 - 1944

Peter Lukasiewicz

1939 - 1940

Vincent Wenc

1945 - 1946

Julian Rybicki

1947 - 1948

Kazimierz Ratkiewicz

1949 - 1951

Joseph Wojnar

1952

Joseph Koziol

1952, 1954

Alexander Pawelczyk

1953

Thomas Bien

1955 - 1957

Theodore Knapik

1958 - 1963

Dominic "Chet" Kuras

1964 - 1992

Ronald Klocek

1993 - 1998

Michael Chludenski

1999 - 2000

Walter Kuras

2001

Joseph Kuras

2002 - 2004